Monday, January 3, 2011 ★★ Business / Vol. 26 / No. 26 / P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alert:

News Truce ends, AFP Reds on war footing | **Lifestyle** Never-ending song of ageless Sylvia la Torre | **Across** Drunken deputy kills town cop chief | **Learning** The top 10 education stories of 2010 | **World** Pope condemns bombing of Egypt church

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
GOOD NEWS. FEARLESS VIEWS

LAST DAY FOR JOYRIDE Children wheep it up on the slide at the playground of Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City on Sunday, the last day of the holiday break, before they go back to school today.

Chavit to solons: Expel Ping first

'Reactions premature, biased against my son'

'Abadilla 5' to go on hunger strike to get Mercy

By Marlon Ramos

Garcia's wife, 3 sons absolved in court deal

By Leila B. Salaverria

HOW ABOUT expelling the legislator 'wanted for murder first?

By Leonardo Rubin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon and TJ Burgonio

ANOTHER MEDAL President Aquino hastens award on Rear Adm. Alexander Pama during the AFP Day in Camp Aguinaldo on Dec. 21, 2010. AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo David Jr. salutes the President. Mr. Aquino will attend Pama's turnover rites on Tuesday.

KILLER BUS A provincial bus with a smashed windshield lies on the side of the Ilaw Talleres in Barangay Sto. Cristo in Calamba City, after overtaking a car, it collided with a passenger jeepney where the 7 fatalities were riding and 4 others in the jeepney were seriously injured.

7 members of family die in accident

Bemedalled officer named new Philippine Navy chief

By Dona Z. Pazolagutan

'Team Lauro' makes sure he's not alone

By Cecily Tumayan

Baguio shivers but P-Noy gone

By Vincent Cabreza and Delmar Carino
Inquirer Northern Luzon

Querubin outfought, outnumbered in home front

By Fe Zamora

HOME FRONT Retired Marine Col. Ariel Querubin is surrounded by his wife and children when he filed his certificate of candidacy for senator at the Comelec Office, Intramuros, Manila, last year.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

4D's Lotto
9 4 | 7 19 | 23 31

6/55 Super Lotto
7 1 3 | 4 7 1

3D's Lotto
8 0 4

6/49 Mega Lotto
3 16 17 19 31 41
P55,184,738.40

AFP, Reds take up fight positions

By Donna Pazzibugan

THEIR 10-DAY ceasefire ends today with both government troops and communist rebel fighters resuming their combat positions.

The communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) also assumed government control of violating the ceasefire which began on Dec. 16.

It was the longest holiday truce in over four decades of armed clashes between government forces and communist insurgents, which started in the aftermath of peace negotiations in February hosted by Norway.

Vice Admiral Rafael Benjamin Calderon in Tarlac District on Saturday two days before the ceasefire was to end.

Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesperson of the Bhagyan Amor Command, said Edwin Brigano, 33, was arrested while undergoing medical treatment for a serious respiratory illness and hepatitis. The arresting unit, the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police, raided the house of a relative of Brigano's wife where the rebel fighter was staying during the ceasefire. He is now in the custody of the military in Camp Panacan.

In a statement released in Davao City Sanchez denounced "the trumped-up robbery with homicide charges immediately slapped against Comrade Edwin [which is] a lame attempt to justify his illegal arrest that clearly violated the mutual and simultaneous 10-day holiday truce."

The military flinches said, most immediately release Brigano.

Form of treachery

NDFP-Bhagyan spokesperson George Madlos said he had received reports of missing soldiers "and these things happened while the ceasefire was ongoing."

Madlos, also raised suspicions that the military's so-called peace and development programs in villages were yet another form of treachery.

"These projects will spark conflict in the community, which may be the real objective of the government. The implementation will be coupled with [the] harassment and intimidation of the residents whom they believe are supporters and sympathizers of the insurgency," Madlos warned.

He claimed the military has established bases in villages in all of Surigao del Norte and had increased civilian resistance.

On the other hand, the AFP also accused the NPA of violating the ceasefire more—by firing on a militia member in Cotabato, Negros Oriental on Dec. 30 and by attacking farmers who were supposed to meet a rebel who wanted to surrender in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro on Dec. 22.

No casualties were reported in both skirmishes.

Sanchez, in response to the AFP's charges, Lt. Col. Medel Aguilar, said the 10th cadre in Davao Oriental was arrested because of a standing warrant of arrest. He added the rebel was in the custody of the police (not the military), contrary to the statement of the AFP.

He denied the military had violated the ceasefire, saying: "The military, the 10th ID (Infantry Division) in particular, supported the ceasefire. We even sent it to convince to give our misguided brothers more time to spend with their families. That would be good for all of us."

Nothing to offer

The spokesperson of the 10th ID also said the military saw no reason to discontinue its peace and development programs. He accused the NPA of preparing to destroy all our efforts in bringing development to the barangays which will eliminate the conditions that the underground movement needs to recruit new members."

"We have proven to move on while the rebels do not have anything to offer; they have no program but a rehash of old tactics like revolutionary tourism, which is extortion, and continued use of landmines," he said.

"It's time to move on. We don't really need millions' might anymore against the rebels. We have to move on and continue development. At this point we believe that the CPP-NPA is not a security threat but a threat to further economic development," Mabanta added.

Sabar ratifying won't work

Meanwhile, the presidential adviser on the peace process, Teresita Deles, said the order ending of rebel commanders was "irrelevant" and would not affect the government's bid to resume peace talks.

"We have struggled with a statement entitled to southern 'Signing rebel commander Gregorio 'Ka Roger' Rosales which prodded rebels to renew their fighting resolve because they "cannot expect any changes that would bring good or relief to the toiling masses."

"In the first place, said Deles, we're not negotiating with 'Ka Roger,' who has been quiet for the last two years. (While) report by Jeffrey M. Tupaz and Dennis Jay Santos, Inquirer Mindanao and Christina O. Hernández

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Firecracker toll now 794; injured told to seek care

By Jocelyn R. Uy

MORE MAKING who sustained serious injuries during the New Year celebration must not delay seeking medical attention as their condition could worsen, health officials warned as the number of firecracker-related accidents swelled to 794 as of early Sunday.

In issuing the warning, Dr. Eric Tayag, chief of the Department of Health National Epidemiology Center, noted that many revelers who sustained slight injuries usually resisted for about two days, when their condition worsened, before going to the hospital.

He warned that such persons risked tetanus infection. Tetanus has an incubation period of at least eight days and if left untreated, often leads to death, he said.

"We are appealing to these people to immediately seek medical help because, first and foremost, wounds caused by firecrackers are more dangerous than any ordinary wound," said Tayag.

The DOH yesterday reported that from the morning of New Year's Day up to early yesterday, 240 more people were taken to various hospitals for fireworks-related and stray bullet injuries, bringing the total number of casualties since Dec. 21 to 794.

Of these accidents, 28 were caused by the indiscriminate firing of guns while 10 cases were attributed to firecracker poisoning. At least 585 cases were burns without amputation while 46 others had to undergo amputation because of their injuries.

More than 58 percent of the cases, or 465, were traced to the use of illegal fireworks, with the "piccolo"—a small and cheap firecracker lit like a matchstick—as the leading culprit.

Injuries numbering 113 were blamed on the use of bottle, a rocket-type pyrotechnic, while 46 injuries were attributed to "five star" firecrackers.

The piccolo, "pla-pla," five star, "talaan bomb," Giniguis (Ginigis), Judas, watusi and "super lolo" have been banned but they are still manufactured and sold.

Prior to the New Year festivities, the DOH had been urging revelers to employ creative ways to greet 2011 other than exploding firecrackers, like holding customized and organized fireworks displays in town plazas, resorts and street parties.

Saying that a total ban on fireworks was a tall order, Health Secretary Enrique Ona noted that one way of reducing the number of casualties every year was to upgrade the manufacture of fireworks with community displays as the main market.

Think-tank doesn't think much of Comelec claim

By Jerome Aning

A UNIVERSITY of the Philippines (UP) think-tank which monitored the May 2010 elections has cast doubt on the ability of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to hold another automated polling given the way the agency mismanaged the last one.

The Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG), in its final report on the May 10, 2010, automated national and local elections that was obtained by the Inquirer, cited the lack of transparency, critical management failures and the poor connection of the sanctity of the ballot as among the reasons for debunking the Comelec's claim that the automated election system (AES) was "a resounding success."

The 400-page report, completed with the support of the European Union and local partners such as the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Coordinating Council for People's Development and Governance, Computer Professionals Union, Health Alliance for Democracy and National Union of People's Lawyers, was submitted to Congress last month.

CenPEG joined the roll of prominent figures such as former Chief Justice Reynato Puno and former Comelec Commissioner Ike Velarma in the Comelec, including a review of the voting technology and the modalities in conducting the automated election.

Sen. Gringo Honasan, who was member of the bicameral committee tasked to investigate before the 2013 midterm polls 17 months from now.

"What concerns all Filipinos now—especially the Filipino information technology community—is to demand the full disclosure of all election information that is in the possession of the citizens' enfranchised task of conducting their own appraisal of the first automated election and for the whole country to become better prepared for the next election," CenPEG said.

The group is currently embroiled with the Comelec on the implementation of the Supreme Court's decision dated Sept. 27, 2010, which ordered the poll body to disclose the AES source code, referring to the series of software programs that operated the 80,000 precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines used by Smartmatic for the May 10 elections.

The Comelec had said it was open to a review of the source code subject to certain conditions, while Smartmatic had admitted that it did not have proprietary rights over the code.

CenPEG said Comelec's failure to be transparent in other areas, such as the contents of the contract with Smartmatic, the transmission data and other documents "left the worst treasures of the implementation of the system on his/her rights."

'Abolishing GMA agency right move'

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—President Aquino did right in abolishing the Luzon Urban Beltway (LUB) super region office since the agency had accomplished most of the tasks assigned to it by former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, according to a former official.

"The LUB's work was finished even before the May (2010) election. There are no more things to do at LUB. it should have been automatically abolished," former LUB Chair Edgardo Pamintuan said.

Executive Order 15 also scrapped the office of the Metro Luzon Growth Quadrangle Area, Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group, Mindanao Economic Development Council, Mindoro Development Council, Office of the Presidential Adviser on New Government Center, Bicol River Basin Watershed Management Project, Office of External Affairs and Office of the Presidential Adviser on Global Warming and Climate Change.

The order said the agencies were either redundant or inconsistent with the programs of the Aquino administration. Tarra Quismo, Inquirer Central Luzon

Cabinet to take up higher tolls

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Aquino's economic team will discuss on Thursday how to loosen the "panic" caused by the steep increase in toll fees on the major highways leading to Metro Manila.

Communications Secretary Ricky Carandang said the economic cluster will discuss, among other things, the 20% percent toll fee hike at the South Luzon Expressway which took effect on Jan. 1.

"We're very concerned about the hikes and that will be part of the agenda of the meeting," Carandang said in a phone interview.

Lawyer Brianie Francisco, who tried but failed to get the Supreme Court to stop the toll hikes, said President Aquino could still intervene in the matter, as former President Joseph Estrada did in February 1999.

Mitigation

Carandang said Cabinet members led by Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima and Transportation and Communication Secretary Jose de Jesus had been discussing for some time how to mitigate the effects of the higher tolls.

Carandang said the Cabinet economic cluster earlier had sought to "find a way to mitigate the increases without inconvenience saying that the Palace was wrangling on to constituted obligations with inventory."

Among the options discussed by the cluster was having a staggered or graduated increase, he said.

"We'll have a better idea when the cluster meets on Thursday," Carandang said.

In a statement, Francisco urged President Aquino to do what Estrada did on Feb. 12, 1999 when he directed then Pub. lic Works Secretary Gregorio Vigilar, before was then chair of the Toll Regulatory Board, to stop the implementation of a toll rate increase "pending the outcome of the public hearings which you are mandated to conduct under your duress."

Estrada memo

In Estrada's memorandum to Vigilar, he mentioned Bid Protest Appeal Decision No. 1112 allowed the TRB chair to "hear, readily and proceed again from time to time the rates of toll that will be charged from direct users of toll facilities and upon notice and hearing."

"There is no reason why President Aquino cannot do the same thing and direct the TRB to hold in abeyance the implementation of the recent toll hikes, pending the outcome of the public hearings which he is mandated to conduct under the duress," Francisco said.

President Aquino had earlier assured business investors that the government would abide by its contractual obligations.

'Knights' help Church against RH measure

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE KNIGHTS of Columbus, a Catholic fraternity and service organization, is employing a massive tank to help the Catholic Church in its campaign against the controversial reproductive health (RH) bill pending in Congress.

The Knights of Columbus is the Philippines is producing a comic book on life and family and will release it for free to the public, according to Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, media director of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

"The lay organization will circulate the comic book tackling the RH bill nationwide in the first quarter of 2011," Quitorio told reporters in an interview. The comic book aims to spread the Church's teachings against the use of artificial contraceptives.

The Catholic Church has mostly opposed the RH bill, which has gained the support of President Aquino. The measure promotes sex education in schools and expands public access to family planning methods, including artificial contraceptives.

The 384 bill controversy, which had been successfully blocked by the Church in previous Congresses, is being tabled for discussion again in the current Congress.

When asked if he thought the RH bill would gain more ground this year, Quitorio said it was unlikely to happen because "no education process" has been ongoing among PE-PINOS.

He said the issue of the HH bill has managed to keep afloat because its backers and supporters were making a lot of noise. "But it's a favorable thing, it is very fleeting and it won't last," he said.

He added that "the troops of the Church, which has been entering for more than 2,000 years, were already battle tested."

HIV infections rising in some areas of PH, warns UN official

By Jerry E. Esplanada

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, with 10 being the most alarming, the HIV/AIDS problem in the Philippines is now pegged at five.

But it is "already right to target specific areas immediately," according to Teresita Mann Bugante, country coordinator of the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

At the national level, only those who are aware of the situation have expressed grave concern over the sharp increase in reported new HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infections, Bugante told The Inquirer.

HIV leads to AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome, a condition in which the body's immune system is attacked, weakened and disabled by the virus, ultimately leading to death. It is transmitted through sexual contact or transfusion of infected blood.

Many are killed into a false sense of security by the average national HIV prevalence of under 0.1 percent, Bugante said.

But there are what she calls "concentrated epidemics" that are being carefully monitored.

Officials in "some places that have reported more than four percent in as much as 53 percent HIV prevalence among its most-at-risk groups are alarmed and are actively pursuing solutions to address their situation," she said.

Short of millennium goals

With only four years to the deadline to achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the country continues to fall short of its ninth MDG, which is to halt the spread of the dreaded HIV/AIDS disease, Bugante emphasized.

Citing official reports, Bugante disclosed that in the Philippines, new infection rates were going up, not down.

"In the 2009 Global AIDS report released by UNAIDS in late November, the Philippines was one of seven nations in the world which reported over 25 percent of new HIV infections between 2001 and 2009, whereas other countries have either stabilized or shown significant declines in the rate of new infections," she noted.

One of two Asian hotspots

Among all countries in Asia, only the Philippines and Bangladesh were now reporting increases in HIV cases, which others either stable or decreasing, said Bugante.

Late last year, UNAIDS reported that the number of new cases of HIV-AIDS around the world had dropped by almost one-fifth over the past decade.

For its part, the Department of Health reported there were 1,300 confirmed new HIV infections during the first 10 months of 2010, compared with 833 for the whole of 2009.

Ten between men accounted for nearly 80 percent of all the 2010 cases, and more than half of those infected were aged between 20 and 29.

Factors contributing to the problem, said Bugante, were: "Continued risk behavior and pervasive misconceptions among most-at-risk (MSPAT) which point to the inadequacy of current behavior change interventions," she said.

The UNAIDS official pointed out that though the national AIDS response is backed by Republic Act No. 8504, or the National AIDS Law, the country, through the Philippine National AIDS Council, has yet to define its prevention strategy and set standards of quality for programs has yet to be operationalized.

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Chapel amid terraces seeks donors

LYON the remote mountains of Bigan, a small Catholic community is hoping for kind souls to help them build their "dream home"—a solar-powered chapel where they can celebrate Mass and hold community events.

Composed of 92 households with 527 members, Barangay Inwaky in Maoyao, Bigan, was first visited by a missionary of the Society of the Divine Word in 2006, according to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (NCBCP) official news website.

The residents, then belonging to the "Tapet-tawa" sect, were encouraged to return to the Catholic faith with the constant visits of Fr. Nonoy Benitez SVD, then rector of the Bigan Catholic Mission.

To spread their call for help to build the "chapel amid the Bigan rice terraces," the residents have tapped the popular social networking site, Facebook.

At present, the residents hold Masses in the home of a kind local couple.

"Every time we celebrate Mass we are doing it under the native house of a generous couple who gave us permission to use it," the residents wrote on Facebook.

Jocelyn R. Uy

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'Gringo' would make Yanks pay

THE GOVERNMENT should use the ongoing review of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) to demand that Washington pay for troops of the longstanding modernization program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

This according to Bro. Eduardo "Gringo" Hosaka who said, "We're practically getting crumbs, or $50 million annually, from the US government for their use in the country compared to the massive military aid it gives to other countries with lower or equal military importance to them."

Hosaka cited US allies like Turkey and Pakistan.

The senior chief of the committee on peace, unification and reconciliation, said the Philippines should assert itself at the VFA review by treating the agreement as a "front contract" where the US must pay "fair rental" for the use of the country's resources.

"I think it's about time that we stop rolling it a (senior's) agreement and start treating it for what it is. The facilities there both in Mindanao are by no means temporary," Hosaka said.

GI Cabuenyan

Smart's wellness plan cited

SMART COMMUNICATIONS Inc. has won an Excellence Award from Asia's premier award-giving body on corporate social responsibility (CSR) for its employee wellness program.

"Live Smart: Healthy U, Healthy U, Happy U" was among the 11 awardees chosen from 141 entries from 99 companies in 15 countries. The award (under the Best Workplace Practices category) was given at the recent 9th Asian CSR Awards held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"We are honored that our employee wellness program was given recognition by a highly respected award-giving body. Smart believes its primary asset is its workforce. Hence, we developed Live Smart to provide a holistic and supportive work environment that considers their physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social and financial well-being," said Annette V. Santiago, head of Smart's Human Resources Management and Development Group.

The Excellence Award is Smart's third from the Asian CSR Awards.

In 2009, by Kabalikat sa Edukasyon was adjudged the best education program in Asia under the Improvement to Education category.

Kabalikat sa Edukasyon (Partner in Education) has benefited over 300 schools, 11,000 teachers and 500,000 students since 2003.

Also last year, Smart's Advocates Drawn for Cell Skies Program won an Excellence Award under the Environmental Excellence category.

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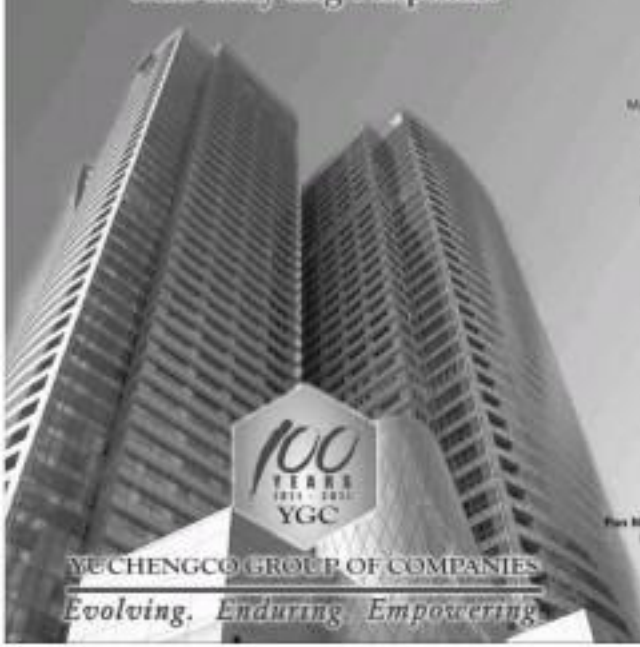

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Build infrastructure to help farmers, Aquino told

By Kristine L. Alave

THE GOVERNMENT must invest in agriculture infrastructure if the Philippine farmer is to be helped to weather the effects of climate change.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala, in a report to President Aquino, said the agriculture sector had become more aware of the ravages of the weather and its vulnerabilities, noting that climate change "is already an ear closeaway."

"The country can already feel the effects of climate change with floods, dry spells and shorter fishing seasons because of the early onset of strong winds and rain," Alcala said.

He urged the government to enhance its risk assessment and disaster management capacities by utilizing science, setting a geographic information system and climate clock.

He stated that the country needed quick and accurate data to conduct effective surveys at the national and local levels.

The government should also pour money into "hardware" that would reduce the vulnerabilities of the agricultural sector and mitigate farmer losses in the event of severe weather situations, he said.

It should also "put even greater investments in equipment and infrastructure like irrigation works that will harvest rain water (big reservoir types and small sized impounding projects), all-weather roads, farm mechanization, warehouses, storage facilities, and other post-harvest investments."

"More durable market access infrastructure like farm-to-market roads, fish ports, post-harvest facilities and equipment shall form part of the climate change adaptation measures of the department," the report said.

Alcala also called for improved research and development in agriculture. The 69th Congress, he said, needs crops that are drought-resistant or salt-evergreen cultivars.

There should also be wider possession of high-quality genetic materials like high-yielding variety seeds, planting materials, fingerlings and livestock.

Central bank has own golf course

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is now the official owner of the Executive Golf Club Resort in Nasugbu, Batangas, a property that the central bank took over from the defunct Orient Bank as partial payment for some-grey loans obtained by the latter bank in the late 1990s.

The Registry of Deeds issued the title of the property to the BSP just before the holiday break last month, said Juan Ac Zaldiga, the BSP's general counsel.

Dr. Zaldiga, who was recently promoted to assistant deputy governor for resource management at the BSP, said the property was valued at P1.2 billion in a 2009 appraisal. But the BSP intends to have the asset re-appraised before selling it, intending to dispose of it before the end-of-2011.

Cash problems

Orient Bank, owned by Jose Go, was given cash and reserves by the BSP to address liquidity problems before it finally shut down in 1999. Earlier reports said the bank obtained more than P5 billion in loans from the central bank.

Following the bank's closure, the BSP has been trying to take possession of some of its assets, including Fairways.

"After a long court battle, we (BSP) were able to take possession of it. The Registry of Deeds already issued the title," Dr. Zaldiga told reporters.

Since the golf club and resort entered fully into Orient Bank's liabilities to the BSP, Dr. Zaldiga said the central bank would continue to look for other properties that it can take over.

Make attractive

As the BSP has no intention of operating a golf course, the natural thing to do would be to sell the property, he said. But before selling it, the central bank will have to upgrade to refurbish the property and make it attractive to buyers, he said.

The operation of the golf club has been suspended since last month when the title was issued to the BSP.

Dr. Zaldiga said the central bank will be studying legal procedures concerning the playing rights of club members.

Its real interests will be sold through public auction. Only in the case of a failed auction would the central bank move in to a negotiated sale, he said. Michelle Z. Reyes

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'Abadilla 5' to go on hunger strike

From page A1

ones, families and supporters of the five men, led by "running priest" Robert Reyes, will themselves hold a 15-hour fasting and prayer vigil starting at 6 a.m. today in front of the Office of the Ombudsman on Quezon City.

Reyes, who vigorously fought for the release of the group collectively known as "Abadilla 5," yesterday said the protest action was a show of "indignation" on the injustice the convicts and their families suffered at the hands of Ombudsman.

"Why the constituted authorities open the cases when the families filed against the arresting policemen? I wonder how the Ombudsman could turn a blind eye on the Abadilla 5 case," Reyes told the inquirer.

Pending before Ombudsman

The criminal case filed against the policemen, who supposedly arrested and supposedly beat scalawags one of the five men, has been pending in the Office of the Ombudsman since 2003, according to the activist priest.

The case was first filed under the Department of Justice (DOJ) in 1999, seven years later, the DOJ, which was then handed incidentally by Ombudsman herself as acting justice secretary, remanded the case to the assigned body.

What's preventing the Ombudsman from performing her sworn duty to prosecute policemen involved in her bet?" Reyes said.

Illegal arrest

He said the Abadilla 5 were subjects Filipinos who were illegally arrested and tortured. "I personally saw their red their families' suffering," he said.

The five — Joel de Jesus, Lando Lumasang, Ramonito de Jesus, Cesar Bertolan and Augusto Santos — were arrested in Antalo by a Quezon City regional trial court for the 1986 ambushslay of Abadilla, a retended military intelligence officer during the Marcos dictatorship.

Communist sources belonging to the Alex Boncayao Brigade claimed up the killing, but authorities still pursued the case against De Jesus et al.

Four months ago, the Supreme Court, on a vote of 10-4, upheld the Court of Appeals' affirmation of the conviction, dashing the hopes of the group's families and supporters who had campaigned for their release.

Reyes said the Abadilla 5 were supposed to start their hunger strike today, but he advised them to postpone it for at least two weeks so they could physically and emotionally prepare for the protest action.

The protest will be rounded off by a Red Robed Oblation celebration of the New Biblical Priests in Bantayog ng Mga Bayani where the men have been locked up since 1998, to allow the group to stay together inside the main penitentiary's chapel during the day.

"At night, the five men have to sleep inside their detention cells. So they could have to prepare for that," Reyes said.

Speaking with the inquirer on the phone, Lando Lumasang did not hide his disappointment of Ombudsman's inaction on the case, noting he and his family "had fallen victim to injustice several times over."

Review ruling

Lumasang, who narrowly survived a kidney transplant in 2003, expressed his wishes in joining his four convicted in skipping meals just to remind the government to act on their situations.

"Our hunger strike is also to call for the Supreme Court to review its ruling on our conviction. Wan Lathian must should not have happened if only it decided on the case with incontrovertible," he said in Pilipino.

Lumasang said he felt "very sad and sadness" upon hearing the news on the release of Hubert Webb and five other men acquitted by the high court in the Vizconde massacre case.

Said Lumasang: "If someone here who admitted to committing a crime set convicts whatever fellow prisoners are released, you imagine how innocent inmates like us would feel. It's very, very painful."

He said the case of the "Abadilla 5 and Webb were two "classic examples" of how the country's justice system "favors the rich and the powerful over the poor and insignificant like us."

Justice for rich

He said the recent statement of the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on the high tribunal's rulings on the two controversial cases highlighted the difference between "justice for the rich and justice for the poor in the Philippines."

"I just wish somebody out judges and justices would stand up to their duty to serve justice where it's due, regardless of your connections and status in society," he said.

Reyes said the AHRC statement should prompt the magistrates to explain "the unexplainable" in their decisions on the reinstatement of a star witness and the acquittal of the accused.

He noted that in the Vizconde massacre case, the court dismissed the testimony of star witness Jessica Alfaro who personally knew Webb et al. and who even sat in the Davao at the commission of the crime.

Why the double standard?

But in the case of Abadilla 5, Reyes said the justices believed the lone prosecution witness Freddie Lim even though the latter admitted he had never seen the perpetrators until a photograph of one of them was shown to him by the police.

"What made Hubert's alibi more credible than the alibis of the five men? These are strangers of five men who did not know each other. Why the double standard?" Reyes said.

"The only power of these men and their families is their conviction to fight for the cause of justice and their love for one another," he added.

Baguio shivers but P-Noy gone

From page A1

seem to indicate record-level colder periods, may be even colder than Antonio's last 13," said Lolly Dizon, a weather forecaster at the Baguio office of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Ramires also backed to the presidential Malacañang did not use the President, who was in "private time," as an for reporters to collect on coverage of Mr. Aquino's activities.

The President flew back to Metro Manila on Sunday after

noon from Londres and, a police official said.

The cold weather has been Baguio's best attraction. Earlier, the city government chose Sinulog over a crowded street celebration (Session Road).

The drive was supposed to draw more tourists to Baguio, but people who witnessed Sinulog-planned that organizers had given them soap costs. The city government was unwilling to contract with the drive organizers.

At a Dec. 29 news briefing, Mayor Mauricio Domogan said he was more comfortable with the number of tourists who came to the city this long the Christmas and New Year holidays.

The average number of visitors from December to January is 140,000, but the figure goes up to between 200,000 and 300,000 because of the Baguio Flower Festival in February and the Holy Week in late March or April, records from the city tourism office showed.

"We don't really want more than what our resources can take. Kasi sobrang tao na dito [If they exceed our resources it]? We don't have the infrastructure," Domogan said.

Burnham Park

Many of the city's New Year visitors who stayed until Sunday trooped to the Burnham Park to warm up. A group of visitors from Metro Manila said they were comfortable with the temperature was Dec. 30 and 31, which was around 11 degrees Celsius.

The chill that invaded neighboring Benguet towns, even before tourists in Baguio started shutting their blankets.

Farmers working in the province's upland vegetable gardens said they tightened up snow bonfires on Jan. 1 compared with last year as soon as they felt the temperature.

Frost

Officials of Kibungan in Benguet said cold weather had greeted them from Christmas to New Year. They said farmers anticipate colder mornings in early February when frost blankets vegetable farms.

Benguet Governor Pacita Caluzan said Sunday that temperature as cold in Bontoc, Ifugao in Mankayan town where the hardy lamb were frozen to death.

Bulo Dumdum Villarosa Lay of said the cold weather at the time of the year was not unusual.

Lay-ud said it was not the media parlor "sinag" (frost) but if the temperature continued to dip, farmers might as well prepare their farms for greenhouses and rain-fed cluster operations.

Benguet they be atop the highest mountains of Benguet, Bokong in Kibungan and Bokong in Tublay town in Benguet, Mt. Pulag in Kibungan town and Buyagan-Tablaoang and Ekaang in Buguias town are the coldest communities in Benguet.

Vegetable centers

They are also the vegetable centers of Benguet, which supplies most of Metro Manila's vegetables.

Temperature readings in these areas are often two to three degrees lower than Baguio's.

Paul Rubrico, Metro's agriculturist, often tracks down the temperatures in the town. "Temperature readings have fluctuated. There were spells of cold weather before the start of the year, but it was not as cold as it is now," he said.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

MONDAY (Monday)
Psalter: Week 1
Most Holy Name of Jesus (Monday after Epiphany)
1 Jn 2:29—3:6. Ps 98:1-2c
I will give you all the nations for a possession.
1st Reading 1 Jn 2:22-28

Beloved: Whoever we ask we shall receive, since we keep his commands and do what pleases him.

He commanded us that we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another, as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commands remains in God and God in him; in this we know God has given us about we know he favors us. He believes do not trust every inspiration, but the spirit is to see whether they come from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you recognize the spirit of God: Any spirit that confesses Jesus as the Christ who has embodied flesh is of God, but any spirit that does not recognize Jesus is not from God; it is the spirit of the antichrist. You have heard of his coming and indeed he is in the world.

They are of the world and the world listens them and those of the world listen to them. We are of God and those who know God listen to us, but those who are not of God ignore us. This is how we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Gospel: Mk 6:45-52

Jesus immediately made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land. He saw that they were straining at the oars against a headwind. Early in the morning he came toward them walking on the sea. He meant to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But he spoke to them at once and said, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." He got into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were completely astounded.

The people who lived in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in the land of the shadow of death, a light has shone. From that time on, Jesus began to proclaim his message, "Change your ways; the kingdom of heaven is near." Jesus went around all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people.

The news about him spread throughout the whole of Syria, and the people brought all their sick to him, and all those who suffered the pain and, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and he healed them all. Large crowds followed him from Galilee and the Ten Cities, from Jerusalem, Judea, and from across the Jordan.

The Word of the Lord.

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Chavit to solons: Expel Ping first

From page A1

pending warrant of arrest?" he said.

Lacson disappeared last year and is believed to be hiding out abroad, though he has also been sighted somewhere in Metro Manila, where a court issued a warrant for his arrest for the 2000 abduction and murder of publicist Salvador Dacer and the latter's driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

"[Gerald] will answer by himself all the accusations thrown at him. Let us wait for his return," said Singson, who added that he would be going to Hong Kong next week to visit his son.

Singson yesterday insisted that his son would plead guilty only to the lesser offense of money laundering when he testifies in Hong Kong on Jan. 26, disproving a statement from Ronaldo's lawyer, John Reading.

"He will just plead guilty for possession of cocaine, not drug trafficking," the elder Singson said in a telephone interview.

The lawyer, quoting Reading, earlier reported that Ronaldo may plead guilty to trafficking, after prosecutors refused a plea bargain offer to plead guilty to the lesser charge of drug possession. The prosecution maintained that Ronaldo was importing the drug into Hong Kong.

Trafficking in dangerous drug carries the maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of UKD1 million (Ph$5,000).

Do gentlemanly thing

House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II yesterday appealed to Speaker Feliciano Belmonte and spare his colleagues the rigors of an ethics committee hearing and a plenary vote on his expulsion.

"If he admits guilt, the gentlemanly do-ness thing to do is to voluntarily resign," said Gonzales.

"Otherwise, we will just slap away from our responsibility to discipline members, including ourselves on one, it's a long process. To spare the House of this procedural compliance, and for him to do his duties a la war, he should resign," Gonzales said.

According to Gonzales, a guilty plea to drug trafficking charges does not result in automatic expulsion from the House of Representatives.

The ethics committee would have to hear a case against Singson and report out the outcome to the plenary, leading to disciplinary sanctions.

Expulsion has to be voted by two-thirds of all members, he said.

But there would be public pressure on the House to discipline one of its members, Gonzales said.

"This is one instance that the House should also balance responsibility to the public in a sense that it's ready to discipline one of its own conveniently when the member concerned has pleaded guilty," he said.

No complaint

No complaint has so far been filed against Ronaldo Singson at the House leadership has decided to wait for developments in his case even though it has a zero-tolerance mandate to discipline a member for disorderly behavior.

But even without a complaint, the ethics committee can initiate the expulsion process against Ronaldo Singson if he pleads guilty to drug trafficking charges in Hong Kong, said Belmonte. But Singson is in a phone interview.

"Since it involves a moral issue and it affects the integrity of the House, whether or not there's a complaint, the committee can act on it motu proprio," Belmonte said.

By a vote of a majority of members, the committee could proceed with hearing Singson's case for disciplinary action, said Rupa, the vice chair of the ethics committee.

Rupa, a lawyer, noted while Philippine courts cannot automatically take cognizance of a foreign court decision, the House could choose to do so.

"It's different if it involves a disciplinary action. The House can choose to take cognizance of the proceedings wherein a member pleads guilty in a foreign court," he said.

Bohol Rep. Erico Aumentado, the ethics committee chair, could not be reached for comment.

Rupa, who also chairs the justice committee, said a guilty plea in drug-trafficking charges would spawn "strong cases" and necessitate the initiation of proceedings in the ethics committee.

"If he pleads guilty, then we should proceed to hear his case for disciplinary action," he said.

The committee can recommend disciplinary action, including a reprimand, suspension and dismissal. After it wraps up the hearing, the matter would be put in a vote in plenary, he said.

Until guilty plea

Deputy Speaker Lorenzo Tañada III, an ex-officio member of the ethics committee, said the committee could initiate the expulsion process by a vote of a majority of the members if Ronaldo Singson pleads guilty to drug-trafficking charges.

"If there's an admission that he had committed a crime, without a conviction, if there's a motion to take the case up and start the process of expulsion, just by a majority vote, they can take it up immediately," Tañada said.

But until he enters the guilty plea, "everything is mere speculation," he said.

If the Hong Kong court hands down a guilty verdict, the committee could skip the hearing and proceed directly to the process of expulsion, according to Tañada, who is also a lawyer.

"If he entered a plea of guilt, we might not need him anymore as a witness per se. Did his action cause shame to the institution? If yes, that would merit expulsion," he said.

Deputy Majority Leader Romero Federico Quimbo, an ex-officio member of the ethics committee, said he believed the House could now take cognizance of the case.

"The Speaker may move proprio motuhan action against an allegedly erring representative. As to whether the Speaker will recommend that or not, that's a matter that needs to be taken by the ethics committee," he said in a phone interview.

Speaker Belmonte Jr. yesterday said the ethics committee would take up the issue when Congress reconvenes on Jan. 17.

CDR CHAVIT SINGSON

REP RONALD SINGSON

SEN. LACSON

PUBLIC ADVISORY

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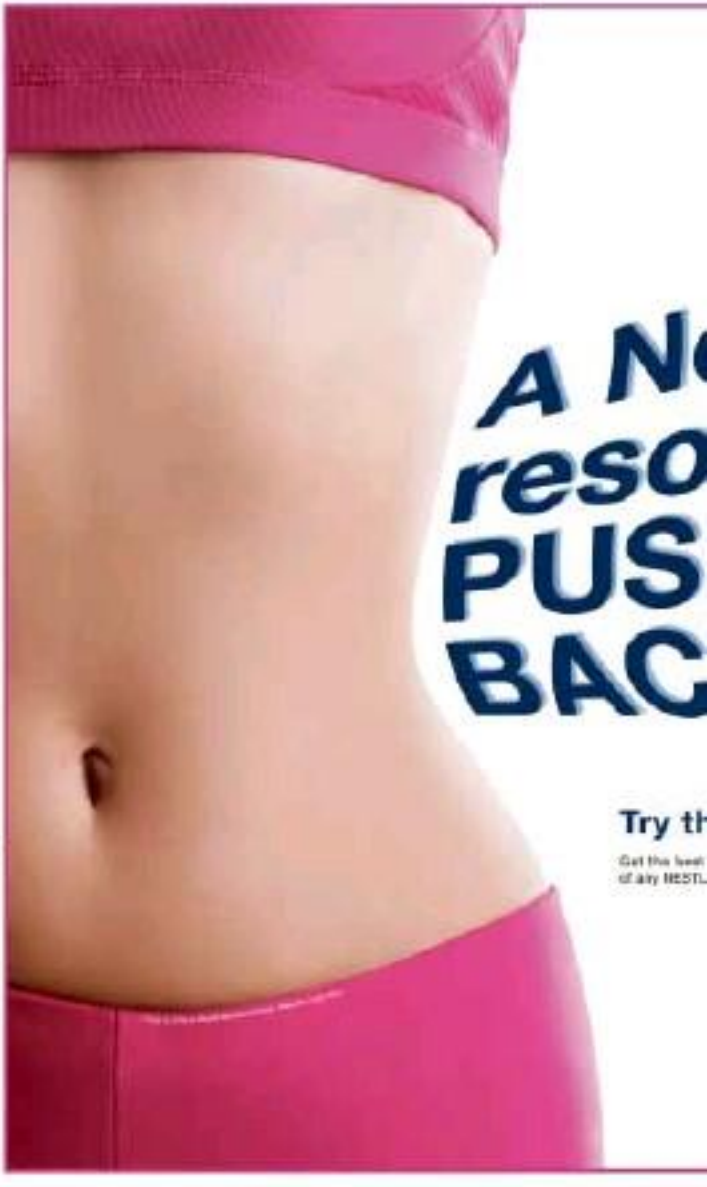

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GO: Make small goals.

Losing weight really depends on the little steps you take. Define your goals and work on a realistic time frame. Losing weight slowly but surely is always better for you.

It is important to remember that meal plans work only when you commit to them. So make this not just a New Year's resolution but your commitment to a healthier life. Good luck!

INQUIRER

OPINION

Kilometer Zero

EDITORIAL

NOW THAT is some good news: Half a million Filipinos thronged to Rizal Park on Dec. 31 to take part in the First New Year's Eve countdown. By most accounts, the first event was orderly, well-organized, entertaining—and safe. The last time the Philippines had so many well-behaved out on the streets must have been in 1998, when hundreds of thousands poured into the country's thoroughfares to join in the countdown (technically a year off, but psychologically just right) to the end of the 20th century.

The New Year's Eve countdown in Rizal Park could be the beginning of a vibrant new tradition. We certainly hope so, not only because a collective countdown fosters a greater sense of community, but also because using the park for just such a purpose will help us recover a better sense of the place.

Two questions. First, what about security? As the [illegible] story on the event reported, safety was just another among the concerns of the National Police and Development Committee, and it showed. "No untoward incidents were reported. Alcoholic drinks, firecrackers and deadly weapons were confiscated at the entrances. The NPDC's security was augmented by units from the Manila Police District, the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces and the barangays around the park."

This is no small feat, considering that the event took place at night, on the very day that some people feel virtually licensed to climb themselves under the table and when the greatest amount of fireworks and other deadly fireworks is usually consumed.

We hope that next year's event will have even more stringent security measures in place; nothing attracts the discontented and the desperate like a roaring success.

The park is no stranger to huge crowds, of course. Cory Aquino held two mammoth rallies in the park in February 1986, before the snap election and after manipulated results showed that election victory was being stolen from her. And the enormous crowd that filled the park in January 1995 to hear Pope John Paul II may have been the biggest crowd in history, ever: about 5 million people, showed up, and the Pope had to abandon his Popemobile and ride a helicopter to make it to the Quirino Grandstand.

But the 500,000 who watched 2000 chide into 2001 at the Luneta have the unique distinction of being (traditionists, cultural traditionists

Second: Isn't it in poor taste to connote the park, which after all is named after the national hero and is the site where many presidents take their oaths of office, from merely a Southeast Asian version of New York's Times Square?

But in fact the park—whether in the time it was known as Bagumbayan or Luneta, or since it was renamed after Jose Rizal—has always had a dual role to perform both in the affairs of the city of Manila and in the national imagination. It was and has always been a pleasant picnic grounds, and it was and has always been a place of martyrdom too.

Rizal was only the most famous of the many (indeed, innumerable) martyrs who were executed on the park's grounds. Many were killed before Rizal, after the Revolution broke out in August 1896; many more were killed after.

And yet we know, from the memoirs of revolutionaries like the Katipunero known as Mabini[illegible], that even during the tumultuous years that led to the emergence of the first republic in Asia, the park continued to be used for merrymaking. Thus, Mabini found himself with a few friends at the park in January 1898, when the Pact of Biak-na-bato had offered a brief spell of peace, enjoying themselves and, at the very same time, drinking deep of the lessons of history. (In his memoirs, Mabini recalls pointing to the exact spot where Rizal was shot and praying to many patriots like the martyr.)

The juxtaposition, or the intricate cross-layering, of town plaza and martyr's mound is thus the very nature of the park.

That Rizal's statue in the center of it all is also Kilometer Zero, the point of reference for all (literal) milestones in the country's roads and highways, makes the park an even more apt site to begin a new community-strengthening tradition.

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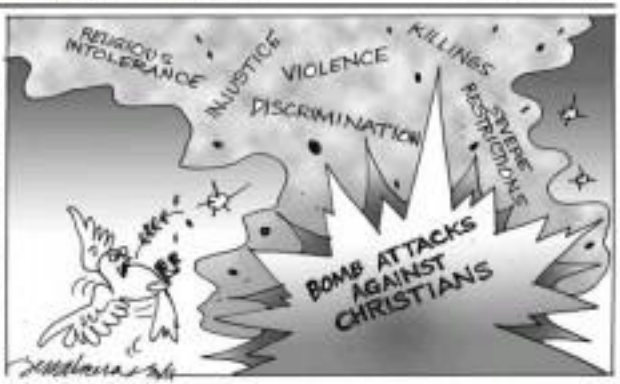


Make more fireworks displays, not mini-bombs

MY DAUGHTERS, nieces and other relatives and I spent New Year's Eve in front of a multicolored and, from there, watched the dazzling annual fireworks with beautiful, multicolored fireworks as 2000 turned to 2001. Bodies zoomed into the sky, down the tall buildings and there burst into sparks of red, white, green, orange and yellow lights that were slowly lost to sight like so many pretty flowers. Before they disappeared, more rockets flew into the air to blossom into more colorful flowers. They were everywhere. The sound of their explosions came to us only faintly. We were high up, away from the noise, the smoke, the smell of sulphur, safe from the wayward firecracker or bullet that can do us harm.

The television set was on and as we watched the spectacular fireworks all around us, the television showed us fireworks' victims being taken to the emergency rooms of hospitals, the latest in mounting tally from here, pinpointing to pain, the children crying, and on their bloody hands, eyes, legs and other parts of the body.

How can the spirited celebration of revelry on New Year's Eve be so brutalized and in the same time be so ugly?

Blame the Chinese for inventing and manufacturing so as also tradition of exploding firecrackers to make noise and drive away the evil spirits and bad luck of the old year. But blame Filipinos for their penchant for turning a thing dangerously good into a deadly one that kill and send hundreds of others to the hospital in each year each and now one begins.

Every year, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) wage campaigns to convince the people to refrain from celebrating firecrackers. But every year the number of victims increases despite the millions of pesos the DOH and PNP spend for press releases.

At their press [illegible] conferences, DOH and police spokesmen want to put themselves on the back by citing dubious statistics showing that the number of victims this year is lower than that for the same period last year, trying to prove that their bans on fireworks are successful in their "Iwas Paputok" campaigns.

AS I SEE IT

Neal D. Cruz

Wrong. Figures from existing provinces are still coming in and already the number of victims this year has already exceeded that of last year.

As I see it, they are all wasting their time. The children from this most recent are children. Children and the real press releases not listen to warnings. All they know is that it is big fun to light the explosive devices, watch them explode and listen to the big bangs. The accidents that have happened to others will never happen to them, they believe. This sorry happens only once a year, so might as well enjoy it while you can.

As a boy I also used to explode firecrackers, but not only on New Year's Eve but also on the days and [illegible] holidays in. I celebrated least ending during the school events to save my "loans" for the next days of festivities.

But the firecrackers then were the small, [illegible] and were wrapped in red paper with the name of the brand, usually Chinese, were tipped red, three-pronged spear in the hands on the package. The flame of the firecrackers were [illegible] up together so that when you in one of them, all the others were exploding like a machine gun. We carefully separated them so that we could light them one by one to make us make them last longer. We would hold a firecracker with the tips of our fingers and let it explode and it was not powerful enough to injure our fingers. These were numbered Bang Kong and Chinese.

Then they [illegible] to produce [illegible] using the powder from unexploded bombs and artillery shells not even bigger than the ones that they did not make the signatures saved from [illegible] from the Chinese made. They made the "triple powers" which were meant to make. They could not accurately measure the amount of gunpowder to put in each firecracker to do the "triple" because more powerful than the Chinese version.

The "triples" became bigger and more powerful with the "five tens," then all the same "torpedo." Also triangle-shaped but bigger and therefore more and necessarily more expensive. They could blast your hands.

For have they killed any pieces of string in gunpowder and stuck them into the firecrackers. Sometimes, the fuses burn slowly, but at other times, they burn too fast, making the firecracker explode before you could throw it away.

And because adults like bigger more powerful explosives, the provincial[illegible] manufacturers began to make more powerful firecrackers then sold for more money. So a sort of arms race began among the producers. More and more powerful explosives were [illegible] and more [illegible]. The whistle-bomb, "pla-pla," "super-lolo" and other mini-bombs that could blow off fingers and hands were born.

The pseudo, a new creature, is deceptive. It is small, red, slightly larger than a cigarette and therefore does not scare children like the bigger crackers do, but is very powerful. That is why the biggest death of victims were reported by the parents.

The DOH wants to send bans on firecrackers; the police would be happy with a reduction in the number of victims. But there should not be even one victim. And if the government is doing its job properly, no one should be hurt—the same in a way before Filipino entrepreneurs became manufacturers of firecrackers.

As I said before, the firecrackers should not be only during the last few days before New Year. It should be during the whole year while the pyrotechnics are still being made. The police and local government units should require the firecracker factories already. Once the firecrackers are already produced, the manufacturers will try to sell them to local officials to save their investments. The government should encourage them to produce instead the fireworks' displays that is safer, more [illegible] and also more fun and more.

Gains

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I REMEMBER an editorial featured years shortly after Edsa. It was a reaction to comments some people were making then, namely, the Philippines had supplied a decision, a new moral high ground, and we stopped with supplying her when would that sunshine into tangible gains? Specifically, when would that translate into social reform and economic progress?

Economic and that of course the country remarked, social reform, social justice, progress too. But you'd think by the way people spoke that the social transformation, in the shift from communism to democracy, from the economy by a system of a sense of rights and wrongs, that the social and justice was going ahead, you'd think it was intangible by the way it was connected with presumably tangible things.

In fact, said footwork, it was the most real thing in the world. It was the most tangible thing in the world, it was the most intangible thing in the world. In itself it was a gain of incalculable proportions. That people could finally breathe a sigh of relief, that a people could finally breathe the air of freedom, at quite simply that a people could wake up to experiencing their government to be so them, their them, not them blind, to massive them be complaining about it, that is the difference between life and death.

It was the same gain you, or promise, or hope, dawns of social reform and economic progress.

I remembered that after Edsa declared before New Year's Day that the country had begun to feel the gains under his government. Government, he said, had employed 600,000 million last November when a debate of P6 billion was proposed. "My dislike stalwart that by tightening our belts and those that needed funds were no longer funded so we can window down, all limited that needed funding were funded but will not that is my plan." The Presidential time remarks after a 1989 survey said that 61 percents of Filipinos [illegible] 2002 took a positive outlook. "They have chosen," he said.

Well, PNoy is an economist and ought be expected to look at things from an economic perspective. He is also, I suspect, trying to assure critics, secretly also—of the past administration, value our working has changed after he came to power.

He doesn't need to. A lot in fact has changed since his government, and it is being felt by the people. Not all of it, or even the bulk of it, has to do with economics. A great deal of it has to do simply with something the country can in fact obtain it used to be vested on us head. Since the country toppled to rejoin it like two eras—Gloria did not go without lack of effort to rein on—the country has gained a new mood, one shaped not by economics but by a sense of the restraint of right and wrong has crept back to the land. In fact the ordinary citizen can wake up without expressing government to some him at every turn, and murder him if he protests too much, to political activists are worth rock. That is politics, that is sympathy, that is civil.

Breathing the air of freedom is a sensation. All pain is worth. That you just felt for the rich and middle class, that is life by the pain. You need not go far to see proof of it. That was about those Filipino from the shadows in the limelight, the public's perception that the [illegible] were more democratic and serving democracy and sentiments, good sacrificed. That was what one of the other presidential candidates' pitch about their being the best suitors to Aquino's legacy. That was also my skepticism about the problem of corruption is not just an economic one, it is a moral one. They know that the problem of [illegible] is not just an economic problem of underspend, it is not just a problem of expertise, it is a problem of trust.

This is massive knowledge, we can feel, it has no use by life. You don't need to go see the [illegible] to see how the country has been [illegible] to economic health. That is power to be spite many of Manny Villar seeing the works of his real estate company was because of PNoy's victory, which restored confidence in the market. That is power to be seen in a good deal of the signs assessed the level deals in his campaign.

I saw a recent recently when I visited the US Los Novenales, a tremendous [illegible], it was suspicious, on the part of the Pinoys there to do something for the land of their birth. Or in the case of the Filipinos in Hawaii, for the Filipinos there that even from Aquino's, the investors has something to do with it. Many of them are looking for a haven, a refuge, in their cramped state. But the sense that their [illegible] is not the only reason

The Epiphany for a divided world

SOUNDING BOARD
Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

The magi did not know it, but the king they were looking for was threatened by a paranoiac in dread of losing his throne. 'When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may do him homage,' Herod said

One of the normally fascinating elements of the Christmas story is the journey of the Magi. The Philippines celebrated the feast yesterday, to others countries it is still celebrated on Jan. 6. The feast tells of a straightforward story of wise men wearing the Arabian dresses guided only by a star astute in search of an unknown king. But the story is long and humanistic. Tradition tells us that they rode on camels. I remember when in our childhood, after finishing our gifts by the window on Epiphany day, we would await the grooms for camel food peanut.

The magi did not know it, but the king they were looking for was threatened by a paranoiac who was in paranoiac dread of losing his throne. "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." Of course, Herod never meant his word. Nevertheless, disturbing the Jerusalem and Judean minefield, the magi are armed the murderous intent. It was coming biblical times where God communicated with men in dreams to steer them.

The simple outline of the story is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of moms; that his birth took place in the time of king Herod; that Herod was certainly naive and liked a pantomime dread of losing his throne; that the magi knew by the star of a legitimate descendant of king David; that the magi found the infant and, in a miracle of faith, adored him and gifted him with gold, frankincense and myrrh; and finally that God stepped in to substitute bravery to rescue magi and Child. "And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way."

We do not know for certain who the magi were and how many. All we know for certain is that the Greek word magoi means a person gifted with superior knowledge, an expert in some field, especially astrology. The magi evidently were not kings. Tradition has developed to say that there were three of them, and that their names were—Melchior, representing black skinned people; Balthasar, representing Arabians; and Gaspar, representing the Europeans and the light skinned race. And since not everyone does speak of the Epiphany or revelation of God, Scripture tells us that "when King Herod heard [about the magi] he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

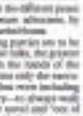
And what is the relevance of the feast for us today? The story comes to us again in today's world where there is so much racial, ethnic, religious and class intolerance in so many parts of the word including our own. We have unresolved political and class and ethnic conflicts among us. There is the MNLF war on one front and the NPA on the mainland on another. There are the oppositionists throw bricks and stones in the Palace, the President himself is at war even with the Supreme Court.

The principal characteristic of the feast as told by Scripture is fruitfulness. We see this in Isaiah: "Light has come ... the glory of the Lord shines upon you ... darkness may cover the earth, but upon you yet shines all darkness. The feast of the Epiphany tells us that God has come to us all and for us all. In the midst of the noise and anxiety of the season we need to ignore this truth. The Epiphany reminds us that we have all been called out of the darkness of our sinfulness into the light of God's love and care. We are reminded that we are all equal. Today, therefore, we do not surrender to despair but we sometimes to pray that all men and women will be united as God's children living in peace and holiness.

In various times in the past and to various different people, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed as heir of everything and through whom he made every thing that is."

From aces to zest

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO
Carlos Isagani T. Zarate



While 11 presidents downplayed the significance of the Dec. 29 event in Barrio del Pilar, a unique be denied that despite the alleged "weakening" of the nationwide movement, it is still strongly and resiliently holding sway in many parts of the country, especially in the countryside where big business interests, both domestic and foreign, are subjecting one to rich-infested resources like gold, copper, iron, etc.

Thus, in seven-dozen forums where I spoke last year as representative of the Union of Peoples' Lawyers in Mindanao (UPLM) and the right-advocacy group Bantag Kinatagod Mindanao, I have always pointed out that the essence phase of the peace process is the most crucial one and that its trajectory of failure or success should not be left solely to the powers-that-be—with each of the negotiating tables. The people—the real stakeholders in the ongoing peace process—should now take an active part by ensuring that their agenda is given utmost attention by the negotiating panels of the government. the NDFP and the MILF. One way of doing that is by participating actively in the different peace forums, either sponsored by peace advocates, by the government, or even by the rebel forces.

As it is, while the negotiating parties are to be lauded for the resumption of the talks, the greatest challenge now is really still in the hands of the government—and this means not only the executive departments under Pnoy but even including the legislative and the judiciary—to always wash the cancer really and to consider issues that "cut to the bone" formulate in dealing with the substantive issues involved in the talks.

Despite what the naysayers and the doomsayers have said, I don't doubt the sincerity of both the MILF and the NDF in pushing and in fact in the core cousins of the present armed conflict in the country, particularly in Mindanao, which beyond these two still very much active and resilient revolutionary organizations.

* * *

As the first chapter of 2010 came to a close, I am thankful once again that I spent the welcoming of the New Year in my hometown, the bustling and bustling southern port city of General Santos (or Gensan).

Spending New Year with my siblings and parents is one occasion that has become rare in the past several years or so. Civilian, although only a couple of hours' drive away from Barrio City, has become for me the monthly routine of interacting with childhood friends and for periodic visits to my parents, who are now being handled by the inconveniences that come with aging.

My Gensan visits again became a place for solitude, for renewal and for reaffirmation. The two-second year-end appointment with my dynamic and the devoted medical men who made me possible the things that truly mattered and those that do not. I realized, too, that in 2010, I spent considerable time chasing mirages and shadows—having events that mattered, personal and political conditions, like many others, I also took chances—some calculated, some out of wisdom and blind passions, yet, many times out of principled and first convictions. Instead, somewhere along the unexplored forays into the battle of personal commitments, 2010 is more just was bittersweet and unheavily.

Thus, as 2011 unfolds, I am chasing the following events that are to be thanked for because they are the ones that matter, that in 2011, I spent mindfully. Not that anything complete and that does happen. "For the acts, the actions and the selves. For the time, the breaks and the busts. For the causes, the accidents and the crosses. For the drugs, the drugs and the drabs. For the elders, the children and the kids.

"For family, for FRIENDS and the fellowships. For the genius, the grits and the gimmes. For the health, the land and the hell. For the indulgence, the intentions and the insistence. For the pay, the pain and the pleasure. For the love, the lust and the like. For the sons, the sires and the sirens. For the ayes, the assistants and the accomplishers. For the loss, the loss and the pin-yang. For the sins, the sinners and the insiders."

But the "more and less" that came to pass, I say thank you 2010! Welcome 2011, and may the God of History, Allah, Magbabaya, the Great Architect of the Universe, guide us in our resolutions, may we be a peaceful, just and progressive People.

A place in the sun

COMMENTARY
Jose de Venecia Jr.

[Text of the separate Silver Medals Ceremonies Poem (MEP).]

Reconciling beliefs and destiny On the conflict zone, bringing disasters into compliance with the law can often be more important than punishing them for their past offenses. General Alberto Romulo, Department of Energy Secretary, after American forces all offered amnesty to those who had opposed them.

Charles II in 1660 restored those of Oliver Cromwell's men who had beheaded his father, Executive Secretary Rodriguez. Hitler's Nazi troops into to arrest forces, has held a tribunal jointly with the United Nations every day such leaders specifically accused of genocide.

We too could see amnesty extended to all as conservatively as the President and Congress may judge fitting. But an amnesty proclamation could begin reconciling tribal and society and healing the wounds inflicted by 40 years of civil war.

Public action to end the internal struggles with those who are the cause of poverty, marginalization, namely remorseful, sorry's malcontents. Insurgencies arise from government's weaknesses—from its failure to deliver the health care, education, infrastructure and justice it owes those of the people who have been denied these basic services.

Ironically rebellion becomes easier to finance the better the economy grows—as is happening in both India and the Philippines—since higher inequality is one of capitalism's consequences. We must find a way of tempering the individual excessive capitalist tendencies with socialism's compassion for those whose development looses behind. I have proposed in the past years in Washington, D.C.'s conservative Heritage Foundation, a new economic concept called "Inclusive Capitalism" because of capitalism and socialism in a mixed economy and social order, approximating Germany's successful social market economy.

Islands but we should accept equating basic peace as primarily a "police problem." The deployment of presidential units by municipal governments is particularly counter-productive. It unavoidably creates blood-letters and complicates post-conflict settlements.

In my view, counter-insurgency should be mandated that the reason that other a people have awakened, have is one an alternative to creating chaos as equals.

A place in the sun for everyone. Since it began in 1990, the UPN-NPA insurgency has cost one economy over P1 billion. Communists and civil are dead. The successive amidst generations it has consumed have been a tragic loss to national society. We cannot afford this behavior of our most idealistic young people any longer.

A few months ago, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on the 13th anniversary of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), we were asked to send a peace mission to Nepal to break the dangerous deadlocks between the Maoist, Marxist and Congress. The mission went to Kathmandu and met with the Nepalese Prime Minister, the Speaker of the National Unity, the four current political factions of this task. We also proposed, and it was agreed, to convene a Track 2 diplomacy meeting among the ruling and opposition parties of India and Pakistan in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Prime Minister Singh of India to discuss ongoing issues including Kashmir.

President Aquino's order directing state prosecutors to drop criminal charges against the "Morong-69" is praiseworthy. It should soon be extended to the 350 political prisoners in the country, including prisoners ... rapists ... except those who have committed rape, murder and heinous crimes. By the extension of amnesty should consider the twin principles of justice and reconciliation.

President Aquino's order directing state prosecutors to drop criminal charges against the "Morong-69" is praiseworthy. It should soon be extended to the 350 political prisoners in the country, including all political prisoners ... rapists ... except those who have committed rape, murder and heinous crimes. By the extension of amnesty should consider the twin principles of justice and reconciliation.

Former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. is founding chairman of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP).

Strictly for our senior citizens

REVEILLE
Ramon J. Farolan

FIRST OF all, I wish to greet my fellow senior citizens a Happy and Prosperous New Year, but most especially a star free from the inflation and difficulties that ordinarily dogs us in this stage of our lives. Special greetings go to the Coalition of Services of the Elderly Inc. (COSE) in the persons of Ed Ermlark and Francisco Magsaysay for the wonderful Christmas greetings sent during the holiday season. The photograph of an old man, perhaps not in the best of health but smiling and certainly in his heart of gentle, along with a quote from Leo Mahvelous, "To love another person is to see the face of God," was the most meaningful Christmas card I have received in many, many years.

* * *

For senior citizens, the year just ended brought us added blessings that have made our lives less stressful by lifting a little the burden of the ever-increasing cost of living.

The implementing Rules and Regulations (IRRs) of Republic Act No. 9994, also known as the "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010," were unconflict last July. For the benefit of those still unaware of the new law (and to surprise how many people don't know about the existence of RA 9994), here once again are some of the more important provisions:

- Senior citizens shall be entitled to a 20 percent discount and exemption from the value-added tax (VAT) of 12 percent on the sale of goods and services from all establishments for the exclusive use or enjoyment of senior citizens. What is not to be found of brands or hotels or hotels exclusive use or enjoyment of senior citizens.

Subject to exemption from VAT, this means that we now enjoy the full 20 percent discount which earlier had been reduced for all practical purposes to only 8 percent.

- Vitamins and mineral supplements are now covered by the law, provided they are medically prescribed by a physician. Not important—the purchase must be accompanied by the standard medical prescription, just like regular medicines. Included under this provision are influenza and pneumonia vaccines.

- The law now purchase eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, prosthetics, artificial limb replacements, canes, wheelchairs, or geriatric diapers using the same privilege as above.

- Under said payments—no discounts and VAT exemption shall also apply when the senior citizen pays using a credit card.

- Indigent senior citizens—the new law provides for a monthly social pension of P500 for indigent senior citizens aged 76 years and above, pursuant to an eligibility criteria to be determined by the DSWD. The shall be arising more on this subject as soon as the DSWD finalizes its work and the program is fully implemented.)

All indigent senior citizens shall be covered by the National Health Program of Philhealth. Local government units shall allocate the necessary funds to ensure coverage of these indigent senior citizens.

- Failure to abide by the provisions of this law—Upon filing of an appropriate complaint and after due notice and hearing, the proper authorities may cause the cancellation or revocation of the business permit, permit to operate, or franchise of the offending party.

* * *

Last month, an interesting case was brought to my attention by Senior S. Co, a retired senior member of Wack Wack Golf & Country Club.

Briefly, Co complained that Cora Blanche Food Service Corporation, a corporation doing business at the Wack Wack Club, refused to grant him the 20 percent discount for senior citizens.

Now keep in mind that in the IRR of RA 9994, section 4, Restrictive Criteria states: "Non-profit, clubs golf and country clubs shall not be covered by this law because they are private and for exclusive membership only, as proven by their bits' registration papers, are not mandated to give the twenty percent senior citizens discount. However, should restaurants and food establishments inside these country clubs be independent concessionaires and food sold are not exclusively for members only but also for guests, they must grant the twenty percent senior citizen discount."

Co filed a complaint with the City of Mandaluyong. Cora Blanche's defense is that it is not an independent concessionaire, but merely a service provider with professional supervision in the restaurant business, being also that the restaurant is operated by the club and not by Cora Blanche.

After hearings, the Legal Department held the view that Cora Blanche is an independent concessionaire and therefore must grant the complainant Antonio Co the senior citizen discount.

The next step depends on the other senior citizens of Wack Wack. It is their risk and if they do not wish to pursue the matter, that is their prerogative. Wack Wack being a private facility has open to the private sector.

* * *

Last Friday was the golden wedding anniversary of our friends Anna and Ben Pacheco, of Makiramba City. Ben and my wife Penny were classmates at St. Theresa's College, high School Class of 1954. The presiding priest, Fr. Ramon Arriola of the Archdiocese of Manila, was formerly with PLDT before he joined the priesthood.

For homily simple and meaningful, was the kind that many of us look forward to but seldom hear from the pulpit.

Father Arriola said that he was advised by his superiors never to turn down requests for services as altar or golden wedding anniversaries. It only to emphasize the three-tenets now: (1) God's love for us is unconditional and unchanging, (2) God is ready to forgive us every time we fall, and (3) God is always ready to bless us through his love, the love that he has appointed as inherit everything and through whom he made every thing that is."

Father Arriola's sermon is the best I have ever heard in almost 60 years of attending Mass. He stressed that marriage is not a 50-50 proposition but a 100-100 commitment. Each partner must be willing to give his or her all to the relationship. Each must be willing to forgive the other for his or her shortcomings. Each must be willing to accept the other for what he or she is.

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In his wise advice to our the services Father Arriola pointed to relate a story about a Lolo and his grandson. The Lolo asked the boy if he knew the difference between having finished and being complete. When the boy appeared puzzled, the Lolo provided the answer, saying that if a man joins the wrong woman for a wife, he is finished but if he chooses the right woman, he becomes complete. Then, addressing the groom, Father Arriola said "You may now kiss your bride and finish."

To Anna and Ben Pacheco, may the next 50 years mean as much as their first with good health and much happiness!

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Citizens needed to push peace

WE MUST all support the cause of peace. There is nothing more important than peace at this time in our life in society.

We have heard too many successive wars for many lives have been wasted. Conflict will be the continuing scourge of our nation if unresolved in the land peoples.

We, as individuals and responsible citizens, must help our local officials and the community as a whole to exert a remedy for peace. Our involvement and participation—be they the coalition—to the affairs of our community and nation are needed.

The government alone cannot achieve peace for the entire nation. For some areas of us may be enjoying relative peace, but we cannot be apathetic, to what is happening around us. We cannot just shrug our shoulders and continue with our indifference.

On the other hand, those of us in places still under the influence of insurgents must bind together and give all information on rebel activities to help the government's efforts to ensure peace. Here in Lanao del Sur provinces surrounded by growing rebel-like rebels because ordinary citizens tipped off the military and police on the activities of the faceless groups.

It is time to see to our lives peace today. But we should all work to ensure and sustain it. And to preserve it at all costs.

—ROMAT S. MACARUAL
bong.macarual@yahoo.com

SC refutes Neal Cruz column on presidential tribunal

THE SIERRA in Neal H. Cruz's Dec. 22 column titled "Supreme Court is on the spot."

Contrary to what Cruz claimed, the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) is composed of all 15 Supreme Court justices as provided for in the Constitution. Second, as recently held by the Court in Macalintal v. Presidential Electoral Tribunal, "the PET was constituted in implementation of Sec. 4, Article VII of the Constitution, and it finds fully complies—not unlawfully differ—the constitutional directive."

Last, there is absolutely no truth that the Supreme Court justices receive P350,000 a month from the PET as allowances. The justices receive a reasonable allowances to their capacity as members of the PET, and it is very very below what Cruz maliciously imputed in his Dec. 22 column.

—ATTY. MARIO E. NARQUEL
court administrator
Supreme Court of the Philippines

Making a difference

THE DEC. 27 editorial titled "Forgotten" came as a real surprise to me! Never have I read in any editorial of a widely circulated paper such a statement as "Most Caloocan folk are brave—all of them real Bonifacios in his own words."

What a travesty of truth is! I have been a Caloocan resident for many years and I can say that the Pepe Smith world-known publication titles "The Bonifacios and The Mas/Not Times then reading your editorial is like seeing a Dolphy fight dummy in the dark (but ghosts of the world's guess).

Yes, you are making a difference, and one that really matters. Here it is!

—MR. CECILIO RAMOSO, JR.
assistant to Magdalena
Lazan Brady Centre
Lincoln Heights, Quezon City

Amnesty an ordinary thing in PH

WHAT'S THE fuss all about? The raging debate about the proposed "amnesty" for the rebel soldiers who had joined former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo removed from Malacañang for being the most corrupt leader that country ever had, is really neither here nor there. Whether or not they should free admit guilt or a condition was not even taken into consideration. It's a no-brainer.

Gen. Gringo Honasan is right. There is no legal competition for the soldiers to plead guilty to having violated the laws of mankind. The mere application for amnesty is admission enough. Precedents: 12-29-1105 (coup) is in black and white is nothing more than making a bitch out of a self-admitting Mesmerized-deserving sucker debasing. Perhaps, another 20 pesos says should do it. Five years ... ten years ... to speaks, boys does, does this ... same issues!

The truth of the matter is, we have had "amnesties" in this country all the time. We have them all, more times than possible. Those who fail to pay or underpay their income taxes or civil matter taxes, had the only "condition" imposed for one to enjoy any cash tax amnesties is to pay the full tax or full tax obligation (i.e., sans interest charges, surcharges and penalties), and to a stated, fine to erase offenses or forbidden.

The second condition is to bring the taxpayers back into the mainstream and to save paying their dues. As a consumer for the government required the tax delinquents to admit any guilt or wrongdoing. Just pay the tax and forget about it. Those amnesties are expired. Then there are repeal clause, just like that. Amnesty, indeed, means never having to say you're sorry, period.

—STEPHEN L. MENAYO
slmenayo@yahoo.com.ph

HOPPY New Year!

Low, low fares for the year of the rabbit!

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		₱1,699	Manila to Singapore Clark to Singapore
₱599	Manila to Bacolod, Catbalogan, Catarman, Cebu, Kalibo, Legazpi or Tuguegarao Cebu to Dumaguete or Ozamiz Davao to Cagayan de Oro	₱1,999	Manila to Guangzhou
		₱2,299	Clark to Hong Kong or Macau
₱699	Manila to Laoag, Tacloban or Tagbilaran Cebu to Davao	₱2,499	Manila to Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh or Macau Cebu to Hong Kong
₱799	Manila to Puerto Princesa	₱2,899	Manila to Brunei NEW!
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Higher taxes imposed without any notice

PLEASE READ with me as I vent my frustration and disappointment with the government of Tagaytay City.

I have faithfully been paying taxes on a piece of real property I own in Tagaytay City and I take advantage of the yearly 20-percent discount given to early payers—those who pay before the February deadline.

For each year's tax obligation, and being based in Manila, I always remember to go to the Tagaytay City Hall by 8 a.m. I took this...

For years, I've been paying yearly P995.20. Imagine my shock and surprise when I was charged P1,990—a 200 percent more than my previous tax payments. Understandably, the cash I had with me was not enough to cover the extra new tax imposition. And I did not bring my ATM card.

I was told that if I make a partial payment, I can enroll myself in a 24-percent discount. So I went to the office of the treasurer to ask what was the basis for the higher assessed value of my property and why the taxpayers were not notified about the tax increase. I was told that (1) the increase should have been implemented since year 2000; (2) there was a public hearing on the increase and the homeowners Association had approved it; and (3) the February deadline for the "20-percent discount payment" had been moved to March.

Inside the assessor's office, there were other taxpayers as surprised and shocked as I was with the much higher tax rate. After recovering the surprise that the city government would have implemented the increase on a staggered basis, or that Tagaytay being a "tourism destination," many of those who own real properties there are not Tagaytay residents and they could not have come to know the schedule of the public hearings without being told about it. So as "non-qualifying (sic)," the taxpayers missed the deadline for the 20-percent discount on tax payments.

In effect, he told us to just accept the tax increase since he could not do anything about it as the new law following orders. Because I wanted other taxpayers to be notified about the increase, I went to the mayor's office. There I was referred to the administrator office where I suggested to Dear Pastor to have the tax increase announced through print and broadcast media. I told him it would be worth the cost much; some media outlets would even announce it for free, as a public service. He said "they" would consider my suggestion. But I doubt if they can have acted on it.

Hence, this letter. I am so frustrated and disappointed with the way the Tagaytay local government treated its taxpayers. The hearing could have done was to properly inform us through media. They did not even give us a chance to continue and question the 200-percent increase.

Now I have to go back to Tagaytay to pay my real property tax. What a waste of time, money and effort!

—SERGIO VELASCO
pandoc77@yahoo.com

Spillway as alternative to Laguna dredging?

THERE is a mention in the news item titled "Malacañang: Laguna governor 'desperate' on dredging," December 22, 2010, p. A6.

Gov. Teresita Lazaro's statement "DC [Governor] I may be dredging as a solution to the problem of Laguna de Bay's overflowing, provided there is implementation without the issue of crash grant and corruption.

Nevertheless, I respect the position of the governor without dredging. Pinahusayang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (Pinamalayan, in opposing the move of Governor Ejercito in "exploring a partnership with the Chinese government to dredge" the 90,000-hectare fresh water body."

I have a suggestion to bring a spillway from the lake to Manila Bay through Pinamalayan, as proposed by an late dean dear well-known environmentalist and architect Jesus "Jun" Palafox, who helped Governor Ejercito in preparing the five-point program to rehabilitate Laguna de Bay? I believe that the proposed would help control flooding in the surrounding municipalities and cities of Laguna and Rizal provinces.

—CRISOSTOMO M. VELEZ
Pinamalayan, Laguna

Assistant Editor Tony Bengcoke

Across the NATION

Drunken deputy kills town cop chief

MODELS
Tourists should not mistake these for beggars. These old Negros after themselves as models to complete the pictures provided by these rich-to-be-earners. Old ignores also offer the same services in Bugnan City.
CHARMAINE CARMEN CARVAJAL

Policeman defies order to yield gun, opens fire

By Armand Galang
Inquirer Central Luzon

TALAVERA, Nueva Ecija—The chief of police of this town was shot and killed by his drunken deputy whom he tried to disarm in the town's police station on Saturday night.

Reports said Supt. Ricardo Deyng Jr., the chief of police here, was off duty but decided to drop by the station past 9 p.m. Saturday as he said he usually relieves those on guard, never on their way to Hungduya.

When Deyng arrived to check for him, he found for deputy Insp. Bernardo Castro, whom he designated as officer on charge, absent in the station.

"While inside the station, Deyng heard two gunshots," said Senior Supt. Roberto Abigayan, Nueva Ecija police director.

SPO1 Mario Mendoza, one investor said Deyng went out to check the source of the gunshots and asked about. "Who fired a gun?"

Mendoza said when Deyng saw Castro entering the station, he asked his deputy to surrender it to him. "Give me your gun. Surrender your gun," a police report quoted Deyng as saying.

However, Castro fired at Deyng, killing Deyng in the spot. The first shot was followed by more that hit Deyng in the head and body.

Abigayan said Deyng died while being taken to a hospital here.

Abigayan said Deyng was unarmed during the shooting. "It was only Castro who fired his gun. The other policemen interpreted," he said.

Castro, after attacking Deyng, went to a row of parked vehicles in the nearby town hall compound and stayed there for at least 30 minutes before Abigayan arrived and negotiated his surrender.

Castro yielded past 9 p.m. Police Senior Insp. Bernardo Castro, whom he designated as officer on charge, absent in the station.

Abigayan said Deyng was only on his third month as chief of police of Talavera while Castro served as his deputy in the last two months.

Abigayan said not any valid prompted Castro to attack Deyng as the officer refused to talk about the case. He considered, however, that Castro was drunk.

"[Castro] knows [about] his rights to remain silent," he said.

Castro was taken in custody in Cabanatuan City while administrative and criminal charges were being prepared against him.

Like Deyng, 46, the victim's wife, said she has to accept what happened but the family wanted justice. "That's only what I can say we have to accept it," she said.

The case was among a number of killings and injuries related to New Year revelry in northern and central Luzon.

Rains prompt disaster warning in East Visayas

By Jerry A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—The Office of Civil Defense in Eastern Visayas has warned all local government units in the region to be on alert for floods and landslides amid inclement weather in the region.

There are no reports yet of flooding and landslides but local government units were advised to be prepared and start activating their disaster operations councils, said Ben Linds, operations chief of the regional Office of Civil Defense.

Linds on Sunday said the region was prone to floods and landslides.

Linds said the regional OCD released yesterday an advisory to all provincial, city and municipal officials in the region to activate their disaster councils and prepare action plans if there should be any need to evacuate people.

Eastern Visayas has been experiencing continuous rain since the last week of December due to the tail end of the cold front, said Linds.

Linds also warned fishermen against venturing into their operations during this time due to rough sea conditions.

The regional OCD earlier advised local governments in the region that are rather flood-prone or landslide-prone.

In Leyte, 22 major rivers are listed as flood-prone. These are the Abuyog-Baybay Coastal River in Abuyog; Binahaan and Hilapuan Rivers in Hilongos; Pagbungan in Baybay; the Ormoc, Inopacan and Isabel Rivers, both in Ormoc City; the Sandayan River that crosses the towns of Jaro, Pastrana, Dagami and Palo; the Northeast Leyte Basin traversing the towns of Tanauan, Tolosa, San Miguel and Juan; the Dagami River crossing Barugan, Mayorga and Dagami; Tigbe River in MacArthur; and Layog River in Abuyog town.

In Southern Leyte, five rivers were also identified as flood-prone: Bitoo in Sogod, Inting in Bontoc, Malitbog in Malitbog, Sangputan in Maasin then Catmon in Maasin City.

In Samar listed as flood-prone areas were the Mingalo River in Calbiga and the Gangan River in Gandara, among others.

The cities of Ormoc, Tacloban and Calbayog in Eastern Samar were listed by the OCD as among flood-prone water systems in the province and the Municipalities Pambujan, Catubig and Mondragon in Northern Samar.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ QUEZON

3 deaths start New Year

THREE persons were killed in separate accidents in this province on New Year's Eve.

In Tayabas town, one Ronaldo Lagumen, 19, a resident of Sto. Rosa, Laguna, was traveling on the Maharlika highway in Barangay Lalig aboard his motorcycle when he collided head-on with a car coming from the opposite direction.

Lagumen died on the spot, the report added.

In Mauban town, police said one Edwino Badilla, 30, was dumped by a speeding motorcycle while on foot crossing the national road in Barangay Concepcion.

Badilla died at the Mauban District Hospital. Motorcycle driver Jaziel Lagundo is in police custody.

In Candelaria town shortly before midnight, one Efren Mapalo Jr., 35, was dumped by a vehicle across Maharlikan highway in Barangay Buenavista.

After killing the victim, the vehicle continued into a parked car on the highway and sped off, based Candelaria City.

(with T. Mabilo Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon)

■ LEYTE

P35,000 in bonuses

ECSTATIC employees of Hilongos, Leyte received at least P35,000 each as Christmas bonuses.

Hilongos has a population of 53,000, an annual income of P17 million and an average revenue allotment share of P70 million.

"This is P10,000 more than what they received from the previous administration," said neophyte Mayor Enero Jo Frank.

Frank said this was made possible with the increased tax collection in real property and payroll computerization and the public market.

The mayor said at least P1 million was collected in last months from the road and gravel extraction. From the public market, the mayor said collection grew to P1.8 million today.

Frank, president of the Inter-island Commercial Shipping Operators, Robin Shipping Lines before he was elected mayor last May, has been criticized for supposedly monitoring local taxes.

"I didn't increase any local taxes," he said. "I only implemented the tolled ordinances made by the previous administration," the mayor added.

Hilongos is also the hinterland of Leyte, with more than 5,000 hectares planted to rice. It has a busy sea port that links the eastern side of Leyte province to nearby island provinces of Bohol and Cebu.

Jun Batallo, Inquirer Visayas

■ ZAMBALES

Zambales festival held

BELA-BELO dance festival in Zambales, a two-day festival was launched to highlight the production of banana, cassava and tubers.

The province's agro-economist said the event, dubbed Kalipunan ng Mga Lupon a Zambal (phrase roughly translated into "federation up north"), is designed to draw tourists to the northern towns of the province.

With funds already locked as a tourism magnet to promote Zambales, the town king of the festival "to use some of billing tourists that there's more to Zambales. Aside they venture a little further up the coast," said Sec. Hector-gomez Dolera.

The program started with a free show Dec. 30, followed by a sand-sculpting contest at the Potipot Subway. A cookie bed "bakeoffice" and beach volleyball.

Robert Dungca, Inquirer Central Luzon

■ BAGUIO CITY

Reds complain vs troops

COMMUNIST rebels on Panay Island have accused government troops of violating an 18-day bilateral ceasefire.

Jorie Guerrero, spokesperson of the New People's Army's Jose Marcial Guerrero Command, alleged that soldiers under the Army's 61st Infantry Battalion (61IB) have been conducting combat operations in "NPA areas" on at least six fronts and barangays of Tapaz town in Capiz and Calinog town in Iloilo since Dec. 31.

But the Philippine Army denied Guerrero's allegations.

"They are just fabricating stories. These are just lies," Col. Cesar Nicolo Bonoan, commander of the Army's 301st Brigade, said in a phone interview.

Xavier P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas

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'Team Lauro' makes sure he's not alone

From page A1

help my brother more on Abo, to help him make sense of what happened," she added.

A first cousin, Ann Angeles, said she always reminds Vicente that divine justice exists.

"My concern is for my cousin to have inner peace, since especially there is nothing we can do about his health. Smoking is his outlet. And then there's also his depression that can aggravate everything," said Angeles.

LAURO VICENTE. Pulling away

Constant companion

A group of women relatives have stationed him in Team Lauro aimed at helping Vicente recover from the seventy tragedy, and steer him toward a spiritual path and a life of high purpose.

Finding a constant companion, not necessarily a outlandish one, for Vicente is a top priority of Team Lauro.

If the stalemate had his way, he would never go out of the house where his wife Fatrofilia, 47, and daughters Carmela, 18, and Jeraldin, 7, were stabbed to death on June 30, 1990.

"We cannot convince him to leave the house so we must take turns looking after him, dining with him and making him feel he is not alone," said Angeles.

"He should have someone to talk to, if only to amuse himself. It's better than being alone," she added.

"He needs a companion, if only for his own safety. We're thinking of organizing shifts so there's always someone to look after him. But he wants to be left alone," said Reyes.

Assemblyman Bejar, for several months after the massacre, she stayed with her Tagig City home Monday to Saturday, leaving her husband and young son to fend for themselves at their Sariaya home.

"My family understood. As elder sister lent as a driver so he could move around more conveniently. But then his social life revolved only around the Citizens Against Violence (the predecessor of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption) at the time," said Reyes.

"I even slept in the master bedroom where the crime occurred because fears instead on starting there. I would hear him talking to the dead, asking them to make their presence felt, that he was not scared of them," she said.

Pulling away

The lawyer estimated six of these family meetings during which Vicente sat surrounded by a group of female relatives urging him to stay with them for a few days to take his mind off the fact. 16 Supreme Court decisions acquitting Webb et al.

Vicente just sat there, neither accepting or refusing the invitations, puffing away at a cigarette.

Insisting the fidelity of asking Vicente to leave the house, Angeles suggested that she and the widower's four sisters take turns staying at the house with him.

Half in jest, she said at least he would cook for them since he was a good cook.

Vicente was working as a cook in a South Carolina restaurant, a business venture that he had set up with another US-based relative, when the crime occurred in 1991.

The sisters did not have the heart to tell him that his entire family had been killed. So they told him that his father was dying and asked that he come home.

"What more do I have to lose?" said Vicente, when told that he needed a companion for his own safety.

"What else can they do to me? Rubatin eka," he said.

Waiting for God's judgment

The Vicente family was shocked when they heard the Supreme Court verdict. But rather than call for revenge, Vicente's sisters gathered in the garage, took out their rosaries and visited the Chapel of the Divine Mercy over and over.

"We pray together because God listens," Angeles explained.

"The verdict came from men but God's judgment will be different. I think maybe God has a purpose not only for the Vicentes. This case will serve as an exposure for the Philippines. There might be one of ministers that need to be rectified," she said.

Ivan Angeles who made sure that Mass was celebrated in the house soon after the high court decision was announced.

"In life, there are many mysteries we cannot fathom, many questions without answers. But if we give it up and come to the Lord, we will find perfect solace," Fr. Larry Tan said in his homily.

"The reality of the answers is not pleasant but why did it happen? There is a purpose we do not understand. We can only pray that the family will have the strength to accept and the Lord will be the source of that strength," the priest said.

Every day, the members of Team Lauro call or send text messages to Vicente to assure him that he is not alone.

Angeles calls to remind her cousin to "remember that when God acts, much will prevail."

"Maybe we need to pray more, God's way is not our way. Maybe by still wants Lauro to do something. If you notice, his last name called for blood," Angeles noted.

"We also pray for the Webbs and for the Supreme Court justices because we must not reject anger with love despite what happened," she added.

Reyes makes sure the souls of his sister in law and nieces are included among the Mass intentions and continue at her Fairview parish.

She also prays every day that God gives her brother the grace to move on.

The lawyer's efforts have not been for naught. Vicente said he still has hope that justice will eventually be served.

"I tell myself, to who else should I run to? God pursue? There is no one, not to this country at least. But I am being guided by the Lord," he said.

Garcia's wife, 3 sons cleared in court deal

From page A1

part of the plea bargain, and was subsequently released on bail. The Sandiganbayan is expected to rule this month on the deal.

Bernard Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia, AFP Ret. wishes to respectfully declare that his wife Charito and his sons Juan Paulo, Jan Carl and Timothy mark have absolutely nothing to do with the cases he is now facing in Court," the plea bargain stated.

The agreement also said that Garcia would cooperate with the government without real estate, bank deposits under his name and other assets. He is also authorized to transfer or surrender to the state assets and funds under the name of his wife and sons.

CARLOS GARCIA

Scarce state resources

The prosecution, in the plea bargain agreement, said that the deal was "consistent with the interests of the state since justice will be served proceeding from an assured and speedy trial in a fair manner, while conserving the scarce prosecutorial resources of the state."

It also said that based on jurisprudence, a plea bargain agreement was allowed when the prosecution did not have sufficient evidence to establish the guilt of the accused.

A source privy to the records of the Garcia case noted that on Jan. 7, 2010, the Sandiganbayan denied Garcia's earlier petition for bail, filed before the plea bargain deal was submitted to the court, because there was strong evidence presented.

San Francisco arrest

The agreement detailed the asset, which amounted to a total of P135.455 million, to be conveyed to the state.

It was the December 2003 San Francisco airport arrest of Jan Carl and Juan Paulo for not declaring undeclared amount of $100,000 in cash that prompted the inquiry into the retired general's assets.

Garcia issued a written declaration in which she said that her husband had received gifts, particularly money, from different persons to help him in his campaign for the Philippine Military Academy superintendency and for his trips, she was provided with travel expenses and shopping money in excess of $10,000 to $20,000.

After more books of the detention of his sons, Garcia was investigated and eventually charged with plunder and perjury.

In the plea bargain agreement, Garcia said he was pleading guilty to indirect bribery and facilitating money laundering.

But, at the Dec. 16 hearing at the Sandiganbayan, Garcia pleaded guilty to direct bribery. The Sandiganbayan resolution granting that bail also noted that he had pleaded guilty to direct bribery and facilitating money laundering.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez signed the plea bargain agreement on Feb. 23, 2010. Other signatories were Special Prosecutor Wendell Sulit, Deputy Special Prosecutor Rodwell Rallos, Deputy Special Prosecutor Jesus Wilfred, Assistant Special Prosecutor Jose Balmes, Assistant Special Prosecutor Joseph Capistrano, Carlos Garcia and his lawyer Constantino de Jesus.

Park Avenue condo, cash

The assets to be transferred to the state consist of the Trump Park Avenue condominium in New York worth P43.155 million, real estate in Baguio (P3.650 million), Pasonjan (P7.80 million), Dapitan (P5.8 million) and Guimaras (P5.85, 2722), and seven vehicles worth P4.42 million.

Cash and money in Philippine banks worth P12.51 million, cash in US banks worth P13.05 million; 20,000 shares of stocks in 157 companies, and 3,000 shares of stock in Eastern Cola.

Strong evidence

Garcia subsequently filed a motion for reconsideration of his petition for bail on Feb. 3 last year. On March 19, the prosecution opposed Garcia's motion for reconsideration.

But three days earlier, on March 16, the prosecution and the accused filed a joint motion for the approval of the plea bargain before the Sandiganbayan second division.

The source, who asked not to be named because of a lack of permission to talk about the case from higher ups, said that the earlier denial of bail showed that the evidence in the Garcia case was strong, which was why some were wondering about the need for a plea bargain deal.

Contradictory

The source also said the prosecution's actions appeared contradictory. On one hand, it opposed the bail motion, but at the time, there was already a plea bargain agreement. Brief before the court.

The source noted that bail motion were usually set for hearing three days after the filing.

THE LAST FULL SHOW
While families take advantage of the last day of the Christmas break by shopping in the Mall Park, which is getting a face lift, in private, as Palawan's rich editor's company, on hold. But this isn't the face of the Pinoy holiday outings. Pinoys have a way of holding on to jingle bells and ho-ho-ho, not letting go until — in many ages to look a lot like Christmas.

Querubin outfought, outnumbered in home front

From page A1

growing children.

For Jonathan, his mom "grown up, grown big and wearing rice shoes, my parent, my choice."

In fact, 16-year old Alfred already determines to master some his dad, while the 13-year old Jaq is just an inch or two shorter. Just under Querubin's ear and shoulder, Jonathan, 11, 11 years old, and the youngest, Val, 10.

"They were just babies and kids when I left. They were small children who used to hug my shirt, who would get my shoes. I did not expect this," Querubin confessed, not hiding his amusement.

He had to rummage from a kaldagan box sent by Ed himself for his very apparel he would wear.

SMC consultant

"One of these days," Querubin, who is set to join San Miguel Corp. as a consultant, said, "I'll be the shortest, small-est man in the house."

But it's the whole "kibuds" for the lovestricken Querubin who has experienced what it was like being "outnumbered and outfought" in the battlefield.

He metamorphosis survived across wounds suffered when he led the rebel and, there' attack on Camp Aguinaldo on the December 1989 coup against the Aquino administration. Released and reintegrated into the military after a peace process with the Ramos administration, Querubin was assigned in Mindanao in the mid-1990s.

Medal of Valor

In 2000, Querubin was awarded the Medal of Valor for exemplary gallantry in action displayed during an encounter with an "overwhelming" number of Moro secessionists in central Mindanao.

"I have never stopped counting my blessings, not even in my lowest moments," Querubin, who has been sharing his own spiritual journey with Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals since 1996.

In March, Querubin will be attending Dave graduation ceremonies. Twins Alfred and Jaq are set to graduate from high school and elementary respectively.

His response, then, will be posing the graduating class of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), following in the footsteps of Querubin who graduated from PMA in 1979.

Querubin was a widower with a young son and daughter when he met and married Marilou "Neng" Asuncion of Asingbongo City, who had two young sons from a nullified marriage. Together, they have three boys, ages 10, 11 and 12 years, old respectively.

Years, wine, rice

In the Querubin household, all kids are equal. "We have a mom, time and care family," Querubin said.

His response solves him, illusion, the elder one, took up law, hopefully to help Querubin with his case. When Querubin decided to run for senator, Martin quit law school to be his stepdad's spokesperson.

Graduating 1st sophisthe, Querubin's other eloquent, bold entered the PMA in 2008. Ed Ed may also join the PMA, Querubin said.

As a son of a Medal of Valor awardee, Alfred was exempted from taking the entrance exams that he has to pass the physical exams.

So far, Querubin said the report he received was that Alfred made steady positive scores in the tests.

"But he has to decide for him-self," Querubin said. "If I can decide for them, I'd resist them all to study at PMA for the discipline and gun for him."

In the meantime, Querubin is engaged in another 'unique' battle.

Soirees

His 16-year old daughter Faye, a dusky beauty who stands at 5'3", has been asking dad's permission to attend soirees and the traditional prom night.

The battle-tested dad would say yes only if she agreed in be chaperoned by one of her brothers. Faye, it seems, would have none of it.

So far, a compromise has been made: Faye can choose her date for the prom night, and one of her brothers can be the date of her friend.

"I had to explain to her, you know. She is a cell target, and she understands," Querubin said.

Bemedalled officer named new Navy chief

From page A1

He succeeds Rear Adm. Danilo Gomez, who retires from service upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56 on Sunday.

Military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Jose Mabanta Jr. confirmed Abinal's appointment yesterday. He said Presidential Aquino will attend the turnover ceremonies and parade over his first military command assignment for the year 2011.

Pama belongs to the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1979 whose members now occupy top positions in the military. Among them are Army commanding general Lt. Gen. Antonio Ortiz, Northern Luzon Command chief Lt. Gen. Gaudencio Pangilinan and Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) chief Maj. Gen. Ricardo Rodriguez.

Pama has received numerous military medals and civilian awards in the course of his naval career since graduating from the PMA.

Last Dec. 15, Pama was given the Distinguished Service Star award during the armed forces of the Philippines' 75th anniversary rites for gains made against the Abu Sayyaf while leading the Naval Forces Western Mindanao based in Zamboanga City for two years.

Cpt Jon "Bayanihan"

Pama takes over the Navy command at a time the AFP is implementing "Bayanihan," a new counter-insurgency plan that owes from combat operations-centered strategy and stresses "winning the peace rather than defeating the enemy."

Pama was appointed Navy flag officer-in-charge last December after having served as the Naval Inspector General for three months.

Before his appointment as the Naval Inspector General last September, he was commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao which engaged in hardest with bandits, Islamic extremists and secessionist rebels in southern Mindanao. He held this post since October 2008.

Pama was also commander, commander of the Joint Task Force Trillion which mounted offensives against the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan and Zamboanga.

'Stingray' commander

Pama also served as commander of the Navy's antiterrorism group, the Naval Task Group "Stingray" and commanded other naval task groups that operated in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Pama also successfully commanded deployment and shore assignments and has served as commanding officer of the Navy

ALEXANDER PAMA

vessels including the presidential yacht, BRP Ang Pangulo.

Among the numerous staff positions in the Navy headquarters and AFP general headquarters he held were: division chief of the operations general division of the AFP Office of Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (J-2); assistant chief of naval staff for intelligence (N2); commander of the Naval Intelligence Security Group; commander of the Naval School Center; AFP assistant deputy chief of staff for plans (J5); and senior military assistant and chief of staff to then defense secretary Gilberto Teodoro.

Pama was awarded the Philippine Legion of Honor (Degree of Officer) and conferred the Distinguished Service Star for his bravery in the line of duty.

Adopted son

Pama received his latest service star during the AFP 75th anniversary rites on Dec. 2 "for eminently meritorious and valuable service" as commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao from Dec. 3, 2008 to Sept. 2, 2010 and as head of the Joint Task Force Trillion from Jan. 28 to Sept. 2, 2010.

Vice Admiral Pama effectively managed and supervised the conduct of the Navy's Fleet Maritime operations in Western Mindanao," the citation said.

Other awards Pama received include two Distinguished Navy Crosses, an Outstanding Achievement Medal, the Silver Wing Medal and numerous medals for merit, commendation and campaign such as the Senior Command at Sea Badge and the Marine Command Badge.

The Zamboanga City government has acknowledged Pama's contributions to the city by conferring him the honor of being called by "Adopted Son (Hijo Adoptivo)."

Pama was born on Dec. 21, 1956 in Pasil, Iloilo, the second of six children of Arsenio Pama and Alice Pacilio.

He is married to Carmelita Aguirre from La Paz, Iloilo. They have two sons, Carlo and Archie.

7 members of family die in accident

From page A1

when it collided with the passenger jeepney on the opposite lane at about 12:30 p.m. yesterday.

Killed instantly were six members of the Benigno family: Francisca Pompis, his wife Jay Jay Sanchez Benigno and Wilson, Ehrardo's sons Laurence and Jermel, and Sept. Arcadio Benigno, Batangas police information officer.

Another member of the family, Marivic Pompis, was declared dead on arrival at the Batangas Regional Hospital, he said.

Bonguillo identified the injured as Frank Ace Manilyn, student and Ance, all residents of the Benigno family.

The victims were returning home to Cuneta, Rizal, after celebrating New Year's Eve in Batangas City, Bonguillo said. They were among the thousands who were heading back to the capital at the end of the Christmas holidays.

A three-year old, whose head was almost severed, and another child was among the seven who died, police said.

Some passengers in the bus sustained minor injuries, police said.

The driver of the bus, identified as Aurelio Gonzalez Guevara Jr., was taken into custody by the Boast police. Warrant Officer Leandro Inspector Southern Luzon

INJURED: One of the injured in the deadly accident at the Sico Subway in Batangas City is loaded into an ambulance.

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LEASE AGREEMENTS CONTROVERSY

UST sues firm

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas (UST) has sought P3.5 million in damages from a company which built and operates a multi-level car park on the Manila campus.

In a petition filed on Dec. 30, UST also asked the Manila Regional Trial Court to stop Ichigata Holdings Corp. (IHC) from renting out spaces in the four-story building.

Included in the suit were 22 other companies which entered into leasing agreements with IHC.

In its petition, UST accused IHC of renting out commercial spaces in the car park without its approval. It also claimed that the company deprived it of its share of the profits from the lease and sublease agreements IHC entered into with different firms.

According to the university, it entered into a build-operate-transfer (BOT) contract with IHC in February 2009 for the construction of the multi-level car park. Funding for the project came from a bank loan.

UST also said in its complaint that under the BOT contract, Ichigata was in charge of the operations and maintenance of the parking facility, in addition to a 2,000-square-meter commercial space inside the building for fastfood restaurants, gift shops and book and office supplies stores.

It added that under the contract, "commencement terms and conditions and lay-out of commercial space [would] be subject to UST's approval."

Share of profits

UST claimed that the contract stated that the university would be "entitled, aside from the royalty, to an additional amount equivalent to 10 percent of gross rental receipts per month from the commercial space."

It also said that there was a provision in the contract that the tenants in the car park as well as the nature of their business would have to be approved first by the university.

According to UST, between 2005 and 2008, IHC entered into lease contracts with different companies between 2005 and 2008 with terms ranging from 5 to 15 years. Most of the contracts expired on Dec. 31 last year.

UST, however, alleged that the contracts did not have its consent and approval. The school claimed that although it repeatedly reminded the company of the terms of the BOT contract, IHC owner, Edgardo H. Angeles, merely apologized for the "oversight."

"Despite knowledge of the absence of UST's approval of the terms and conditions of the contracts of lease, defendants proceeded with and continued to execute and implement said contracts resulting in serious damages to UST," the university said in its complaint.

It asked the court to order IHC and the other defendants to pay P3.5 million in actual damages, subject to the result of the final accounting of all rental incomes imposed and collected in connection with all the lease and sub-lease agreements. It will last its moral damages for "impairing the good reputation of UST as one of the leading academic institutions in the country and for unnecessarily dragging it into a legal dispute," P500,000 in exemplary damages and P500,000 in legal fees.

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SAFETY FIRST
TRINIDAD C. Rueda, 39, of Butuan, writes: "Bicycle drivers should always use the designated roads for them, especially along highways."

FPIC tells Senate: Oil leak remediation plan on track

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FIRST PHILIPPINE Industrial Corp. (FPIC) has assured the Senate that its three-point remediation program for areas affected by a leak in its oil pipeline was being implemented as scheduled.

In a letter to Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri on Dec. 28, FPIC officer-in-charge Anthony Mahasa said that the company had started mapping out the routes of the pipeline—the area contaminated by petroleum-with which came from holes in its pipeline.

It added that it was even ahead of schedule in the installation of 20 monitoring wells in the area to assess the impact of the oil leak on the groundwater in Barangays Bunggo, Pila del Pilar and Maquiling.

The three areas are located near the FPIC pipeline which was shut down last year after it was discovered to be the source of the oil that had been leaking into the basement of Vista Tower Condominium since July 12.

The leak forced the closure of the condominium and the declaration of Barangay Bunggo and nearby areas as a "danger zone" due to the high possibility of an explosion or fire occurring because of the presence of oil fumes.

Mahasa said initial assessment studies showed that 9,000 barrels of petroleum had trickled under the bank's bioremediating and the adjacent service road. He said that they plan to put up an product recovery wells to speed up the extraction of the oil from the ground.

Zubiri is the chair of the Senate environment and natural resources committee which conducted an investigation of the pipeline leak in November during which FPIC made a public apology and vowed to pay the affected residents and clean up the contaminated areas.

To address the health risks, Mahasa said the FPIC has deployed weekly medical missions since Nov. 13 to barangay Bunggo to monitor the health problems arising from the pipeline leak. It added that it would set up this month a community medical clinic in the area to speed up their response to any ailments from hydrocarbon exposure.

To address the fire risks, the company has conducted daily tests on the levels of explosivity in the area and the readings have so far been normal, he added.

Mahasa also reported that on Dec. 22, the company was allowed full access to the basement of Vista Tower. He said the company had placed large blowers in the area to deal with the oil fumes and odor.

Mahasa said the FPIC would implement a 24-hour long pump operation in line with the recommendations of a third party expert, SGS Philippines, to maintain a pressurization rate aimed at eliminating gas or bubbles inside the pipeline.

It added that it had already informed the Supreme Court of its actions as part of the writ of kalikasan issued by the high court last month.

DPR noted that the University of the Philippines Institute of Geological Sciences completed on Dec. 13 the testing of 76 wells placed in the high-density corner of the pipeline—Manila, Makati, Pembagan, Mantalupa, San Pedro, Biñan and Calamba—which showed that there were no other leaks in the 117-kilometer long pipeline.

Metro Citizen's call 0918-0985566

Illegal jeepney terminal

MAYOR JEJOMAR please pay attention to the mall. Its situation in Manila. There's a jeepney terminal right in front of city hall. There are traffic enforcers in the area but they do not do anything.

Bonnie Diaan, 32, Manila

Concealed car license plates show criminal intent

IF THE DRIVER of a car does not have criminal intentions, then why is it necessary to put a tinted cover on the license plates which makes the numbers hard to be read?

Papa, 52, Quezon City

Extortion in front of city hall

I WAS DRIVING a jeep last October when I was stopped in front of Manila City Hall by traffic enforcers for allegedly beating the red light. They extorted P200 from me.

Rosario Rosario Jr., 32, Bulacan

Pothole-riddled road

I HOPE local officials will pay attention to the condition of the road leading to the SP Aberon. It is full of potholes.

Ninoy Cuan, 37, Quezon City

Dispute over street sign

ELM STREET is undergoing a renovation including the laying of pipes. The problem is that the contractor does not want to put back the street sign at the intersection of Maginhay and Molino Streets. We were told that it was out their duty to put up the street sign after the carpenting of the street. But in the first place, the sign was taken down because of the road renovation.

Jolanto Mariano, 53, Quezon City

Street parking causes chaos

ATTENTION, Mayor Erap. Traffic in Aduana Intrans became a problem with restaurants and bars in Blue Ridge. Kalayaan park on the street.

Roger Lim, 45, Quezon City

Streetlights not working

MOST OF the newly installed streetlights on Road Section 20 not work. Paging the Manila City engineer's office.

Tad, 50, Manila

Flea market takes over sidewalk

ATTENTION MMDA. The "tatiyangge" (three-wheel motorcycle) that sidewalk on Social corner Lopez Heading to M. Hizons Parañaque has been there since 1 can remember. Please give the sidewalk back to pedestrians.

Alice M., Parañaque City

Drivers violate ban on smoking

TAXI DRIVERS in Quezon City violate the ban on smoking in public conveyances. Especially from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Lani, 31, Las Piñas City

Trike vs SUV: 1 dead, 6 hurt

By Nancy Carvajal

A MAN was instantly killed while six people were reported to be in serious condition after a collision between a tricycle and a sport utility vehicle on the northbound lane of the Cubao underpass on Edsa, Quezon City, on Monday morning.

SPO2 Pedro Sera of the Quezon City Police District's Traffic Enforcement Group identified the fatality as Raul Lawrence Trillo, 32, of Malitlit, Quezon City. He was the driver of the tricycle.

According to Sera, the tricycle had slammed into a Mitsubishi Montero with plate number EIG 974. The SUV driven by Jocelyn Ia, 28, a resident from Valenzuela City.

The sustained serious injuries and was reported to be in the intensive care unit of St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City.

Ia was with her younger siblings when the accident took place. Cristina, Jonathan and Jackilyn were also injured and were being treated in the same hospital.

Also injured were the passengers of the tricycle. Divine Mangpot, 13; and Chenjie Gamentiol, 14, were reported to be in serious conditions at Jose Reyes Medical Center.

The police said their investigation showed that the tricycle was travelling at a fast clip on the Cubao underpass when it ran into the path of the SUV.

The two vehicles collided and due to the impact, the passengers of the tricycle, including the driver, were thrown off the vehicle, the police added.

Trillo died, while on the other hand, Ilapped over.

Witnesses told investigators that the tricycle had taken several people in a bus terminal and was on its way back when the accident happened.

Cops said tricycles were not allowed on major thoroughfares, including Edsa.

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Cops still probing US Navy man's death

A POLICE official yesterday said that investigation was continuing into the death of Lt. Cmdr. Jeremy Bloomfield Mejia, a US Navy man, who arrived on duty recently at the Clark Air Base in Pampanga on Dec. 26.

Mejia was killed after he leaped headfirst into a stairwell outside a police office at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport following his arrival in alleged drug possession.

Chief Insp. Raymundo Ignalin, head of the Ninoy Aquino Investigation section, said it was too early to make any conclusions about the case.

"We are not yet through taking statements from several people," he told the Inquirer.

Mike Navales

POWER PLANT CINEMAS

RANGO, SHUTTLE & WALL-E – (PG13) 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	SI AGIMAT AT SI ENTENG KABISOTE – (SP) 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	GALAW – (PG13) 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:00, 10:15
ANG TANGING INA MO LAST NATIN – (PG13) 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20	EPAL MCTANDOL – (SP) 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	BOGART: 1 IN 23 – (PG13) 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:30

MOVIES & SHOWTIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

WikiLeaks: Sudan leader has secret stash of $9B

HAGUE—The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor has confirmed reports that he told diplomats that WikiLeaks found evidence that President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan had a huge personal fortune skimmed from his country's oil income and kept in foreign accounts.

The assertions were made known in a leaked diplomatic cable first published in the British newspaper The Guardian in December, from the cache obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to numerous organizations. In the cable, a US diplomat cited the United Nations envoy that the prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, had estimated that al-Bashir had a secret stash worth "possibly $9 billion." Sudanese officials have dismissed the report.

In an interview since then, Moreno-Ocampo elaborated on the cable's reference to the money. He said investigators in his office who specialize in tracking the financing of violence had been looking into al-Bashir's finances for several years as part of the war-crimes case against him. He said they had "solid evidence that the president had a large private fortune in secret accounts outside Sudan and was using intermediaries to conduct business deals.

"The money comes from oil," he said, "and he is doing business through third parties." The prosecutor added that he had received testimony that al-Bashir had invested from "hundreds of millions of dollars to several billion, up to $9 billion."

Moreno-Ocampo said it was too early to discuss specifics, including where the secret accounts or the investments are held, other than to rule out any banks in Britain. He said they were in "several places, outside Sudan."

"We shall clarify this later," he said. "We are not ready to make requests to freeze the money."

Absconding with Sudanese oil money—it accounts for more than 90 percent of the country's foreign currency revenues—is not part of the charges the court can bring against Sudan's president. He faces two international arrest warrants, on a charge of war crimes in Sudan's province of Darfur, and a second one on charges of genocide against several Darfuri tribes.

But money-trailing frequently comes into war-crimes investigations, and Moreno-Ocampo said that it was part of his mandate to request the freezing of hidden money or property and later claim it for reparations to victims.

A lawyer close to the work of the financial investigators said that the money trail was a crucial part of the prosecution's case. "We know that money is siphoned off and kept off the books," said the lawyer, who was not authorized to speak publicly about the case and spoke on condition of anonymity. "Al-Bashir is using the funds to control political groups, to pay the militias and also to enrich himself."

Identifying the movements of assets can be crucial to discussions among those who the other players are and how violence is financed, the lawyer said.

Still, the leaked diplomatic cable pointed to other motivations for investigating al-Bashir's money as well. Written in March 2009, soon after ICC judges issued their first arrest warrant for the president, the cable says: "Ocampo suggested if [bashir's] stash of money were disclosed, the year-the figure is possibly $9 billion] it would change Sudanese public opinion from him being a 'crusader' to that of a thief."

It continues, "Ocampo suggested simply exposing that bashir itself alleged accusations would be enough to turn the Sudanese against him."

Also, the content of this and other State Department cables discussing Sudan has come to light, even if accidentally, in the eye of a crucial wrestling embargo ruling meeting on Jan. 9 when southern Sudan will vote whether to secede and declare independence from the politically dominant north. New York Times News Service

AL-BASHIR

Russian plane catches fire, then explodes

MOSCOW—A Russian passenger jet carrying 224 people caught flames it landed down a snowy runway in Siberia and then exploded, killing three people and injuring 45, including six who were badly burned, officials said.

Most of the passengers and crew were evacuated before Saturday's explosion, though people on board described a chaotic scene as the burning plane filled with thick, black smoke and panicked passengers climbed over one another to rush through flames to escape.

Emergency services spokesman Vadim Lyubimenkov said the fire, which began in one of the engines as the plane taxied for takeoff, caused a powerful blast that destroyed the Tu-154 aircraft and spread flames across 1,000 square meters.

Russian television showed video taken with a mobile telephone of the burning plane, its center a giant fireball. All that remained afterward was the tail section and part of a wing.

Lyubimenkov said 30 people were seriously injured, including six who were badly burned and four who suffered broken bones or other injuries. Most of the other injured passengers sought treatment for poisoning after inhaling toxic fumes.

The plane, which belonged to the region of Regal's tourist on base, took to fly from the western Siberian town of Surgut to Moscow.

Among the passengers were members of the Siberian pop group Ne-Ne, who recorded the years on board the plane. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Judo deaths alarm Japanese parents

TOKYO—Research showing that an average of four children die each year during judo sessions in Japan has alarmed some parents in the country prepares to introduce martial arts as a compulsory school sport. Fukihiro Hasukawa is one of those concerned about the government's plan. Because he is convinced his 12-year-old nephew died in a wrestling judo practice. The Japan Judo Accident Victims Association, which Hasukawa helped create with other families last March, has urged the government to set safety guidelines for judo at school. AP

Over 1,000 black birds fall dead from sky in US

BEEBE, ARKANSAS—Wildlife officials are trying to determine what caused more than 1,000 black birds to die and fall to the ship over an Arkansas town. The birds fell over a 2-kilometer area, and preliminary survey indicated that no other dead birds were found outside of that area. Ornithologist Karen Rowe said the birds showed physical trauma, and she speculated that "the flock could have been hit by lightning or high-altitude hail." The skies over Beebe and Polk Counties were quiet that New Year's Eve revelers shooting off fireworks to the area could have startled the birds from their roost and caused them to die from stress. AP

Malaysian centenarian ready to wed again

KUALA LUMPUR—A 113-year-old Malaysian says she has been looking for a wife and he was ready to marry again after an 82-year-old woman responded to his wish, a report said on Tuesday. Ahmad Mohamad bin, who has 25 grandchildren and 40 great-grandchildren, told Malay-language newspaper Harian Metro on a visit to his village that he wanted companionship and a wife to take care of him. The report published the attention of 82-year-old Sumah Ahmad, a widow of 30 years and mother of nine, who said she was willing to do so and had asked her children to contact Ahmad's family to make arrangements. AFP

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Editor Lorenie B. Garcia

The WORLD

A PICTURE raises on Jan. 1 shows a blood-stained image of Jesus Christ outside the al-Qiddisine (The Saints) church in Alexandria which had been the target of an overnight car bomb attack. AFP

Pope leads condemnation of bombing of Egypt church

VATICAN CITY—Pope Benedict XVI on Saturday led the condemnation of a New Year's Day bomb attack in a Coptic church in Egypt that claimed 21 lives, urging world leaders to defend Christians against abuse.

The head of the Roman Catholic Church was the first religious leader to react to the bombing which target- of worshippers as they emerged from a Midnight Mass in Alexandria.

"In his homily at the New Year's Day Mass, the Pope spoke of mounting tensions, "especially discrimination, abuse and religious intolerance which are today striking Christians in particular." "I once again launch a pressing appeal not to give in to discouragement and resignation," he said, calling for "renewed and resolute engagement of leaders of (society" to protect Christians.

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Fuad Twal told Christians to show courage in the face of the attack.

"This latest massacre must lead us to reflect on our situation as Christians, which cannot be allowed to turn its back on the Cross," said Twal, the highest Roman Catholic prelate in the Holy Land.

Condemnation and condolences also flowed out from across the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia strongly "condemns this criminal act which neither our religion or any international norms and others approve of," said a foreign ministry official in state news agency SPA. It described the attack as "terrorist." The head of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, "condemned in the strongest terms the criminal and terrorist act." He urged Egyptians "to disassociate themselves from attempts to instigate sedition or spread division among the people which some want to implant among them." In Damascus an official said, "We're strongly denounce this incorrect crime, which is targeting the national unity and religious pluralism of Egypt and other Arab countries." The Islamist Palestinian movement Hamas also condemned the attack, saying it was "certain it was the work of elements acting against the interests of Egypt and looking to promote sectarianism between Muslims and Christians." Iraqi Shiite Muslim leader in Lebanon, Sheikh Abdel Amir Kabalan, denounced the attack as a "terrorist act aimed at sowing chaos and fear in Egypt." "The terrorist no hears the fingerprints of Zionism who keeps on targeting religious sights and are working to... sow discord between Muslims and Christians," Kabalan said in a statement.

King Mohammed VI of Morocco said in a letter to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak the attack was a "crime against all of humanity" which "is banned by the values of Islam."

"This abject criminal act is contrary to the peaceful nature of the Egyptian people and the history of one of the oldest civilizations with its true traditions of tolerance and solidarities between religions and cultures," US President Barack Obama denounced the bombing as "outrageous." AFP

Brazil's 1st female president takes oath

BRASILIA—Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff began her First full day in office on Sunday after pledging to build on the policies of her hugely popular predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

The 63-year-old divorced grandmother, who was Lula's former chief minister, became the country's 36th head of state on a rainy ceremony under rainbow-hued umbrellas.

A 1952 Rolls Royce convertible took her along streets lined with an estimated 70,000 well-wishers.

As the rain lifted, the car's roof came down and she stood up in the back, dressed in white and waving to people brandishing flags and umbrellas.

She then continued Lula at the presidential palace, receiving from him the green and gold official sash before giving her first speech to the nation.

"I will look after the most vulnerable. I will govern for all Brazilians," she said in the televised address from the palace's balcony after the rain stopped.

Lula himself personally left her alone in the spotlight, save for a brief hand-holding.

Inspired to step down after serving the maximum two consecutive terms permitted under Brazil's constitution, Lula has not said what he plans to do in retirement.

But he consistently weeks ago that he was a "natural born politician" who would not rule out maybe trying to return to the presidency after Rousseff's four-year mandate was over, depending on the performance of the woman he helped get elected.

In her swearing-in speech before Brazil's Congress, Rousseff repeatedly paid homage to her mentor, calling him a "great man" and vowing to maintain his legacy, notably in reducing poverty and promoting economic prosperity.

"The most determined struggle will be to eradicate extreme poverty," she said, declaring: "We can be a most developed and fairest country." Rousseff outlined plans for cut in taxes, environmental protection, improved health services, regional development—and unspecified measures to combat foreign "speculation" that could upset Brazil's economic growth.

ROUSSEFF wipes tears from her face during her inauguration. AP

Rousseff is taking over an economy in great shape.

Brazil's economy grew an unbelievable 7.6 percent in 2010, it enjoys recently discovered oil finds that could make it a big league exporter, it has sent a significant role on the world stage, and it is preparing to host the 2014 football World Cup and 2016 Olympics.

But challenges loom.

Growth is expected to slide to 4.5

Dilma's in good company

ISRAELIA—A list of the main female heads of state and government currently in office around the world, excluding monarchs. The list includes a governor general, who in Australia serves as de facto head of state:

- Australia: Prime Minister Julia Gillard, since June 2010; Governor General Quentin Bryce, since September 2008
- Argentina: President Cristina Kirchner, since October 2007
- Bangladesh: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed, since January 2009 and also between 1996 and 2001
- Brazil: President Dilma Rousseff, since Tuesday
- Costa Rica: Laura Chinchilla, since February 2010
- Croatia: Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor, since July 2009
- Finland: President Tarja Halonen, since 2000; Prime Minister Mari Kiviniemi, since June
- Germany: Chancellor Angela Merkel, since November 2005
- Iceland: Prime Minister Johanna Sigurdardottir, since February 2009
- India: President Pratibha Patil, July 2007
- Ireland: President Mary McAleese, since 1997
- Kyrgyzstan: Interim President Roza Otunbayeva, since April this year
- Liberia: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, November 2005
- Lithuania: President Dalia Grybauskaite, May 2009
- Slovakia: Prime Minister Iveta Radicova, since July
- Switzerland: Confederal President Doris Leuthard, since January 2009
- Trinidad and Tobago: Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, since May

AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE

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SPORTS

Editor Rosalyn R. Mabasa-Ong
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

■ Heat surge atop East; Bulls score /A26

HALOA
Light brushing with extra gentle Haloa protects the outer covering of teeth. Its friendly to teeth...
Friendly Haloa Bristles prevent sensitive teeth
Preserve teeth for life Smile

PHILIPPINE CUP PLAYOFFS

Derby Ace upbeat of title chances

By Marvin R. Castillo

COACH JOHJIE Galleon is digging deep into his bag of expert ruses in amateur ball to keep Derby Ace in the PBA Philippine Cup playoffs and maybe crash into the Letran-rule into the first team in more than a quarter of a century to repeat as all-conference champions.

"I have the experience in the semifinals," Galleon said, referring to a 6-0-0 stint to championship series while calling the shots for the Hadrian Green Raising Fire in the PBL.

"I guess I just learned to bring it up in the PBA."

Down 0-1 in the Talk N Text Tropang Texters, Galleon and the Llanera-to-man the underdogs

LATEST IN SPORTS
Cebu ... Gamboa ... on Talk N Text ... Gilbuena ... San Miguel scholarship ... Smiles

in their best of seven Final Four series only because two key big men—Derby Hammonds and Todd Reavis—continue to nurse injuries.

"Not only is Derby Ace seeking to become the first ballclub since Great Taste in 1994 to repeat as MICPhilippine champs, Gal-leon also is bidding to become the ninth coach to win on his maiden encounter in the league.

SPORTS WATCH /A24

Three dispute Cup's top player plum

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DONAIRE: Heads to ruin care of Nonito Ibrar

Donaire plans to unify world bantam title

By Ramon Muchumicka

If AS succeeds in dethroning WBC-WBO bantamweight champion Fernan. As Montiel next month, Nonito Donaire Jr. plans to unify the title by next taking on WBA king Hold Ramedo of Japan.

Donaire, popularly known as "The Filipino Flash," accepted Ramedo's challenge to fight him after the Japanese southpaw (24-1, 13 KO) won the vacant WBA title with a unanimous 12-round decision over former WBA super flyweight champion Alexander Munoz in Sumatra, Japan, last weekend.

Donaire, who vanished the fight from a $2,000 seat at special-ringside, said the Japanese champion was "crazy" to challenge him, but welcomed the opportunity to unify the title.

The current WBC Continental Americas bantamweight champion, who stopped former world champion Wilfredo Salvarrieta in the fourth round last December in Anaheim, California, will challenge Donaire on Feb. 19 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Back in training at the Undisputed Gym in San Carlos City, California, Donaire said he "just ate while in Japan" because it was pretty cold.

"I started training as soon as I got back," he said.

Donaire said trainer Robert Garcia would report next week along with lightweight Brandon "Bam Bam" Rios and undefeated 20-year-old feather weight Randy Caballero.

"Everything is fine and my whole team is getting used to training again," said Donaire, noting that he now weighs at 130 lb, which is lower than when he started training for the Sidoncito fight.

Internationally respected referee Brian McNinch said the Donaire-Montiel showdown could be "The fight of the Decade," describing both champions as "fantastic boxers."

McNinch said Donaire has the advantage "because he has fight and style."

"He's got the power, he can box, he's the whole package," said McNinch. "But it's an interesting fight and I think it's an even bet. But if you have to give the nod to anyone, you've got to give it to Donaire, slightly."

D. Ace upbeat of title chances

Three dispute Cup's top player plum

From page B27

Former Derby Ace Dumbrique coach Ryan Gregorio, here with already-eliminated Meralco, sees the last session to achieve the feat.

Talk 'N Text coach Chot Reyes belongs to that elite list, and he could prove to be a tough customer for Gallent and his crew with his seniorism and edge in manpower on the side of the Tropang Texters.

"We had a chance to win in the end (of game 3)," Gallent said in dismissing the underdog tag. "And that means that Talk 'N Text can be beaten. We just have to play our game."

Derby Ace lost despite showing 38 points from reigning MVP James Yap in Game 3 as Jimmy Alapag delivered in the endgame for the Texters in a 96-89 victory.

Meanwhile, a three-cornered fight looms in the Best of Three-Philippine Cup's top performers award among Alaska's Joe Devance, Talk 'N Text's Fruway Cuevas and statistical points leader Arwind Santos of San Miguel Beer.

The 1984 Penn Cup will name the winner before Sibelmanday's Final Four schedule pitting the Commodore against the Texters at 5 p.m. and the Boosters versus the Gunnerjay Gaselsa Star Hotel at 7:30 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum.

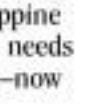
Ramidel de Ocampo of Talk 'N Text was the first recipient of the award after topping the statistical points race in the circumstance of this conference last season.

Santos , Devance and Cuevas are expected to assume numbers in statistical points averages, with the San Miguel swingman grabbing the lead from Devance only in the quarterfinals.

The PBAPC also casts its vote for Best Player of the Conference and the Most Valuable Player and chooses the Finals MVP at the end of each conference.

DENEY: Ace still no match for matching Great Taste feat in 1984.

Philippine sports needs stars—now



ONE GAME AT A TIME

Joe Yarmouth

FURTHER TO title on the crest of the achievements of the talented football team is a boost for a sport that we knew we could do well in.

The Azkals' recent high exposure in the front pages and in the sports sections should remain give the game.

Those who play or have played football are passionate about the sport, as well as those who employ its absence of handwork concept for the goalkeeper and the heroic heresy to score or prevent one.

It is not an easy game to play and this is where its boundless appeal lies for lots of its aficionados around here.

But like most sports hoping to gain attention and savvy Pinoys away from basketball, billiards or boxing, soccer needs to market not only the game but its stars as well.

It's positively all right to collaborately cheer for a national team, as we did when the Azkals played in Vietnam and Indonesia, but to be long run, our continued interest in the game will be fueled by the athletes.

* * *

All sports that have worldwide followings are centered on the star value of its best athletes.

The emergence of the NBA in the 1980s was built on the rivalry between Larry Bird and Magic Johnson, Tennis had Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert, Boxing had Marvin Hagler, Roger Mayweather, Thomas Hearns and Tommy Hearns. Later on, golf would have the youthful Tiger Woods.

In the Philippines, the 1990s and the '00s were unforgettable because of the stars that made their sports resonate with us.

Lydia de Vega, Elma Muros and Isidro del Prado were the Project Ginseng Abay trade idols. Dyan Castillejos and her sisters, as well as Rita Bartolome and Roland So made us watch tennis. Swimmers Christian Jacob and Eric Buhain and later Akiko Thomas was tough as well as basketball and bowling. Ben Lacson was the gymnastics star and later the champion taekwondo contest.

* * *

In Europe and elsewhere where soccer is almost like a religion, it's the stars who make the clubs click with the fans.

Enticing contracts are waved in front of current and upcoming stars, regardless of nationality. The owners know that the fans appreciate talent because the superstars are fulfillments of their own dreams.

There is, of course, blind fan loyalty regardless of who the players are in a lineup, but it does help to have a superstar or two.

There are thousands of young athletes in a variety of sports outside of basketball who are worth a sports marketing effort.

The Modern's Wiggins has done this remarkably well over the last decade, boosting volleyball with college divisions and stars that the fans can identify with.

Athletes are often uncomfortable with pictorials and media interviews as well as meet-and-greet sessions with fans. But their personas and sports will not go very far unless they build a following for them.

* * *

Of course, the key is some form of TV coverage, but a marketable program only connects to the audience when they empathize with the stars of the game.

Soccer should have no problem marketing its games.

The Azkals and related teams have more than enough marketable male and female stars who have the talent and skills that fans can latch on to.

TOM: Levine flashes the No. 1 sign on board Pak

WORLD DRESSAGE

Fab-ulous Leviste triumph

GOOD TURNOUT: TOM Levine showcased her versatility anew by topping the advanced division of the World Dressage Challenge presented by the Manila Polo Club in Makati City.

Levine, a show jumping specialist, scored a runaway victory aboard Fab with a score of 61.21 percent.

Fab is a 14-year-old Dutch warmblood gelding owned by veteran rider Carmen Cuenco Imelda.

The victory helped propel Team Philippines to third place overall in the competition featuring 103 international riders.

Levine edged runners-up Heather Brecon Dutch, who rode Lockheart to a score of 59.27 percent, Ina Bajada and Bravo had a 58.86 to round up the podium winners.

Her victory for Levine and Fab initially did not look possible.

At the Olympian rider and mount prepared to enter the arena, the horse—spooked at the unfamiliar surroundings—unexpectedly threw Levine off her back.

"I was caught off guard when Fab spun around while giving a go-on 'buck,'" said Levine. "Before I knew it, I was on the ground.

"I was wrong to think dressage was safer than showjumping," Levine added in jest.

Despite the tumbles, Fab gave Levine a clean haul, proving that Coco Bollier's grand prix horse is a class of his own.

Foreign judges from the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) adjudicated results from the same room in four dressage divisions.

Other Filipino conquerors in the annual international dressage competition included Vittorio Ibarra (Tanda Rouge) in the Medium category, Ilarri Concepcion (Ormiet Rouge) in the Elementary category and Milton Colamangco-Jaworski (Noble Blue) in the Preliminary.

The Philippines won the last country visited by FEI judges Peter Haller of Germany and Jacques Van Dinde of Belgium last year. They also adjudicated performances by riders in New Zealand, Hong Kong, China and Chinese Taipei.

Jazmine H. Paya

Search for new PBA partner hinges on faith

THE ADMONISHED Jan. 23 meeting of the 35 PBA Annual 6 hour between and 24 owner owners to inform new life into the proceedings.

The PBA has often been owned—and rightly so—in the best organized in asia. But it has had to be days of dowers to avoid woes which can be traversed with foresight.

There's been a willingness to make hard decisions anchored on the basic sacred integrity that must prevail to stay underlining.

In January Cebu Mind, the PBA has a league commissioners who has a sound group of wise problems the league have and are thinking forth in the product.

Built in the PBA product is essential. How to enhance the product is another matter.

* * *

One goal which failed has achieved is bringing the team owners together after what has seemed like an eternity.

Typically, he takes an event for it but secretly refuse to what various like a consequence of thoughts from some of the key team owners. Harvey Pacquiao of Talk 'N Text and Mendoza apparently sparked the idea which was quickly endorsed by Ramon Ang, team owner of San Miguel Beer, Barangay coaches and Purefoods.

Three from four have been pleasing the agenda.

1. The plan for the PBA to have its own coliseum;

2. The issue of a wide-base reserve pool;

3. The question of the national team.

Of course there is nothing to prevent the team owners from coming other to work.

* * *

The question of the TV contract coup for 4 little more complicated than it first glance. The overwhelming consensus is that ABS-CBN should be the choice.

With its nationwide network and a slew of platforms through which the PBA could be promoted and marketed, not to mention its strong global reach through, ABS-CBN does seem the logical choice.

But sometimes logic goes way to business matters.

ABS-CBN feels it has been burned twice in the past by bidding for the TV rights. It has been persuaded the franchise in the past only to lose it to some other entity in the last minute.

Gabby Lopez is almost certainly not prepared to gamble on another rebuff and would want some form of negotiating session first so they could come to terms without a bidding.

Here, public could unfortunately get in the way because ABS-CBN may be required to make a bid and have faith in both Lahad and the PBA to divulge it.

We are confident they will be fair, but if hopes dissolve in their stockholders, this is a mutually rewarding opportunity could sour for him.

The TV negotiations of Pangilinan has also expressed interest in the PBA franchise. This person only missed considering Pangilinan's business involvement in basketball both in the PBA, the collegiate leagues and the Asean Cities basketball tournament.

But it is unlikely that basketball would remain in ABS-5, where eminence in entertainment appear to be getting off to issues of ratings and revenues.

* * *

This would seem having to link up with another available network—possibly IBC-13, which the government wishes to privatize—linked up by the Media Quest group's move to open UHF channel. Digital TV and other potential partners.

There are tempting possibilities but, as we mentioned earlier, faith must be the guiding principle in helping resurrect Ovaltine and reviving a franchise that has real issues such as a TV pattern for the PBA.

The team owners must keep the faith in one another, and those seeking a reason for optimism need to look for PBA considerations and its league history.

The climate of hope in our country today should inspire all concerned to achieve true victory.

INSIDE SPORTS Ronnie Nathanielz

Triathletes Huelgas, Langit post new marks

HUELGAS

By Jasmine W. Payo

TWO record-smashing performances in one event.

Mikee Huelgas became the first Filipino to shatter the men-base long-course and Leo Collas Langit also broke the Philippine women's record in the triathlon events of the recent Mercure Asian Beach Games 2010 in Oman.

Huelgas, one of the national team's three promising Reds, surpassed expectations by recording a time of 1:56:06, 59 minutes and 44 seconds in the grueling main 10km race sports.

Sidelined by injuries for most of the season, Langit missed the podium by just a spot but distinguished herself by breaking the Philippine record in the women's standard held by timeless Rosalie Bautista.

"We still have a long road to go but we are on the right track," said Ivan Carrasco, president of the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TriAp).

Huelgas, a 10-year-old student of De La Salle University, bested the country's previous record of 2:00:57 held for three years by Philippine Airlines (PAL) standout.

Eleventh overall (2:01:53) in the recent Guangzhou Asian Games, Huelgas wound up 10th this time.

Langit clocked 2:11:16 to finish fourth overall in the race made up of a 1.5K swim, 40K bike and 10K run.

The Philippine women's record of 2:13:30 was set by former national star Sandra Israel to Gonzales in the 2007 Southeast Asian Games.

The 24-year-old Langit, also a La Salle alumna, later received another honor as the first Filipino to finish in the top 10 of the International Triathlon Union (ITU) Asian Cup meeting.

Kim Mangrobang finished seventh in the women's division in 2:23.28, while Philip Jovelan ranked 17th among men in 2:16.36.

LEADERSHIP: Eagle Eric Salamat

PRESENCE: Red Lions' Dwight Hamilla

ATENEO coach Norman Black

SAN SEDA coach Franklin Lim

UAAP-NCAA SUPER SENIORS

Salamat, Hermida are it

By Jasmine W. Payo

TWO SENIOR guards who missed out in their respective team's title conquest are among the varsity stars who will be feted for the UAAP-NCAA Press Corps in this season's Collegiate Basketball Awards.

Ateneo's Eric Salamat and San Beda's Dwight Hermida will receive the Super Senior awards for their leadership and standing presence at the end of the country's two premier collegiate leagues.

The annual awards night, also presented by Smart, is slated on Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. at Topaz 3, Gateway Suites in Araneta Center, Cubao.

Salamat and Hermida join the first batch of winners that include Ateneo's Norman Black as the UAAP Coach of the Year and San Beda's Franklin Lim as the NCAA Coach of the Year.

Two other Ateneo cagers, American guard Rich Long and Filadis Jean Hyson Inumerable, will be honored for their clutch performances in the Blue Eagles' third straight UAAP championship romp.

Long made it to the Collegiate Mythical Five along with the Far Eastern University duo of Jill Garcia and Aldrech Ramos, San Sebastian's Calvin Abueva and San Beda's Ibrahim Daniel.

Hermida earned the Pivotal Player plum together with Garvo Lanete, another key San Beda cog who helped the Red Lions' pull off a perfect 18-0 NCAA season.

The event is also supported by Accel, TOA, PRTC, Tenbilicious, Cobienda, San Miguel Corp. and the Philippine Sportswriters Association.

Salamat led the Blue Eagles in points (11.3 ppg), assists (4.1 apg) and steals (1.9 spg) to cop his impressive five years stint in Ateneo.

Hermida also made his presence felt amid a loaded San Beda lineup by averaging 11.8 points, 9.8 rebounds, 5.7 assists and 1.1 steals.

Black, meanwhile, captured his third straight Coach of the Year plum after shooting the Blue Eagles to a UAAP three-peat and to back-to-back title runs in the Philippine Collegiate Champions League.

PSC can run Palaro—with enough funds

GARCIA

By Jane Nimares

THE BOD of the Philippine Sports Commission taking over the Subaybay Ambassadors again extends optimism that will be a gargantuan problem if not sufficiently budgeted.

PSC chair Richie Garcia said the agency faced a financial dilemma years ago when the country's premier multi-event meet for elementary and high school athletes was transferred from the Department of Education.

"I am very concerned regarding the running of the Palaro as it was given to the PSC, except for the funds," he said.

Garcia was a commissioner of the agency when the PSC was tasked with running the show during the administration of former President Estrada.

"We had financial problems back then, so I hope either the PSC takes over the Palaro, the allocation will be included," said Garcia.

Executive Order 62, signed by Estrada on March 5, 1999, paved the way for the transfer of the Palaro from the DepEd to the PSC.

The law was amended by former President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003, through EO 603, bringing the management of the Palaro back to the Education department.

But Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. is again pushing for the PSC takeover of the Palaro to make it a vital component of the agency's grassroots development program.

Cojuangco said national sports associations should execute direct contact over the training of their respective athletes in the Palaro.

He added that the NSAs' hands-on involvement will boost the country's search for new talents who will then be included in the development pool for the national team.

"The Palaro has no use if the NSAs are not involved," said Cojuangco. "There's no continuity in the progress of those athletes after competing in the Palaro."

After competing in the Palaro, the talented athletes should be absorbed by the national pool to sustain their development as future members of the national team, he added.

An owners' meeting like no other

IN HUDDLE

Barbi Cerbu

IN 101 NBA 36 years of existence, topics involving the relentless coverage, the national basketball team and the proposed PBA collusion have been discussed countless times with other members of the league's boardroom.

Thus, when PBA commissioner Chito Salud announced during the PBA Press Corps' Christmas party last month that the team owners would be holding a special meeting to discuss these matters, I was a bit puzzled.

By case, team owners have not met for the league since. There was no reason to get them together a few years back, but this did not materialize. If I remember correctly, a date for a meeting was set but only two owners showed up.

If the issue did issue are on the agenda, why is the pursuer of the very inquisitive and super busy owners required, I wondered.

* * *

"Who called for the meeting, the commissioner or the owners?" I asked Salud, in an effort to determine if there was cause to the Jan. 20 meeting than he had revealed.

In a round-table conference with the press, the commissioner aired no matter's concern about the value of the product, which is the PBA.

I figured the owners' meeting would be an offshoot of Salud's recent move to give up the TV coverage of the PBA. It was like a self-acting dumped by the husband, who no longer found her attractive. The league was losing a big marketing problem.

"I do not wish to concede to the misconception that there is something wrong with the product," Salud said. "There's probably something wrong with the marketing."

He said there was a mutual agreement between the commissioner and the board for the team owners to meet once and for all. Ramon Ang, president/CEO of San Miguel Corp., already expressed approval.

That same night, I learned from one of the governors present during the party that it was PLDT's Manny V. Pangilinan who had requested the meeting. The governor said that MVP's concern, more than anything, was the formation of a strong national team, with the help of the PBA.

"MVP's eyes must still be on the 2012 London Olympics," said the governor. You must be believers as you could have a point in right physics. What he probably has in mind is a hybrid of Smart Gilas and PBA. Or maybe an all-PBA team with the inclusion of naturalized cagers."

* * *

The next day, I called a colleague in broadcasting to find out if MVP might be interested in acquiring the PBA TV coverage rights for ABC 5, which he owns.

My colleague said that ABC 5 might not be able to provide the airtime for the PBA games since the schedule conflicts with Willie Revillame's noontime show.

"The PBA can probably be a tie-up between a joint venture and Willie until mirror. He is sure," my colleague said. "Instead, Jay, San maybe it's time for the PBA to learn to bargain, discriminate and pursue a greater channel."

During the Jan. 25 meeting, the team owners will take determine once and for all who among them are interested in investing in the collusion project and if there is a backbone developers willing to move into a joint venture.

"A joint venture is not a bad way to set up with SM Mall of Asia since they are already building a coliseum? SM group can join the PBA," my colleague said.

Ramon Ang will represent San Miguel Beer, Cambee and Ginebra San Miguel; Manny V. Pangilinan for Talk 'N Text and Meralco; Fred Uytengsu for Alaska, Raymond Yu and Steve Que for Rain or Shine, Terry Que for Air21, George Chua for Barako Bull and JR Nebrida for Powerade.

"I hear the power of attorney to represent the owners," Salud. "I now have the power to call the shots."

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Best Center holds January basketball clinics

THE PIONEERING Best Center Basketball Enhancement and Scientific Training Center begins a long year with clinics in three venues.

The three-decade old Mandaluyong-based Best Center will hold Saturday clinics from Jan. 8 to Feb. 26 at the Ateneo covered courts.

The Ateneo clinics will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. with courses in Introduction to Basketball Level 1 (ballhandling and dribbling), Level 2 (shooting) and Level 3 (individual defense).

Also on the same dates, Xavier School will have its own Best Center clinics from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for students enrolled in Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Every Sunday from Jan. 9, Montessa Academy will also have courses in Levels 1, 2 and 3 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

PHILIPS Jollibee Her

SPORTS

Heat surge atop East; Bulls score

MIAMI Heat's LeBron James (front) over Golden State Warriors' Lee Amundson (left) and Monta Ellis. REUTERS

MIAMI—The Miami Heat overcame a 30-point deficit to beat the Golden State Warriors, 114-107, on Saturday for their 17th victory in 18 NBA games.

LeBron James had 28 points and 14 assists and Dwyane Wade also scored 28 points to help Miami pull into a virtual tie with Boston atop the Eastern Conference. The Celtics lead by .016 percentage points, but the teams are tied in the games-back column.

Former Heat forward Jerrell Wright scored 20 points for Golden State in his first stop back in Miami as an opponent.

Golden State led 30 points in each of the first two quarters, then only 28 in the entire second half.

In Chicago, Chicago made it 13 wins from 15 games by defeating Cleveland, 109-91.

The Bulls trailed by 18 against a team that was missing three of its best players. But they outscored Cleveland 32-9 in the third quarter and hung on after nearly blowing a 15-point lead in the fourth, sending the Cavaliers to their 30th loss in 17 games.

Derrick Rose had 28 points and 11 assists and Luol Deng had 23 points for Chicago.

The Cavaliers hung in even though they were without injured two-time All-Star guard Jamario Moon, Eric Williams and Ramon Sessions.

In Washington, Trevor Ariza scored a season-high 22 points to help New Orleans beat Washington, 92-81.

Emeka Okafor had 17 points and a season-high 20 rebounds for Newt Orleans.

Meanwhile, Boston Celtics All-Star forward Paul Pierce and Orlando Magic coach Stan Van Gundy were fined for separate incidents that occurred earlier this week.

Pierce was fined $15,000 for tossing an object into the stands during a road game against the Indiana Pacers and Van Gundy was fined $35,000 for comments he made about officials following the team's recent losing over the New York Knicks. AP, Reuters

Sharapova begins season in Auckland

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND—Former No. 1 Maria Sharapova is confident of overturning a place among tennis' top-ranked players and says winning another Grand Slam after battling shoulder injuries "would be the greatest achievement of my career."

Sharapova said her decision to bypass to-court rehabilitation treatments in Australia to play in the ASB Classic here underscored her determination to lift her world ranking.

The 23-year-old Russian, ranked 16, will vie with compatriots Dinara Safina and Svetlana Kuznetsova and defending champion Yanina Wickmayer in her first WTA tournament in three months.

"If I am able to win a Grand Slam after an injury, it would be my greatest achievement in my career," she said. AP

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Abu Dhabi final: Nadal outlasts Federer

RAFAEL

ABU DHABI—Top-ranked Rafael Nadal started 2011 with a win over his main rival, beating Roger Federer, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (1), Saturday to defend his title at the inaugural World Tennis Championships.

Both players held serve throughout the match, and Federer had the early momentum in the first tiebreaker, rattling a couple of blistering forehand winners to go up 3-0. But Nadal won the next five points and clinched the set when the Swiss hit a forehand long.

In the second tiebreaker, Nadal went up 1-1 with a drop volley and Federer sent his return long on the next point. The Spaniard then ran up match-point-ending crosscourt forehand winner and converted it when Federer hit a forehand long.

"We both of us, these are the first matches of the season. So it is special for us," Nadal said. "This is the perfect place to start the season here in Abu Dhabi."

Both Federer and Nadal were given byes into the semifinals of the six-player exhibition tournament. Federer beat fifth-ranked Robin Soderling on Friday while Nadal ousted Tomas Berdych.

"I never lost any serve but I still lost the tournament. It's kind of tough," Federer said. "Rafael and myself could have played so many times and so many times it has come down to a few shots here and there. He is an amazing shotmaker. He is well but today he got the better of me."

Last month, the two split champ matches with Nadal winning a match in Spain and Federer one in Switzerland. AP

Our heartfelt thanks to bench/ !

"Legend of the Pony's Tears" was written by Mary Maden and illustrated by Vicki Wallace, and released by the World Association of Newspaper (WAN-IFRA) of which Inquirer is an official representative.

From August 23 to November 8, 2010, Inquirer's Learning Section ran a twelve-part series of a story about a boy named Little Wolf and his adventures with his pony friend among the Native Americans. Each of the twelve chapters published every Monday had activities that teachers used to challenge young readers to develop reading and writing skills as well as critical thinking. Some chapters had related readings that young readers could further explore.

Bench donated copies of the Inquirer for use by partner teachers in their classrooms at fourteen grade schools:

Balanga Elementary School (Bataan); Cabog-Cabog Elementary School (Bataan); Col. E. de Leon Elementary School (Parañaque); Cupang Elementary School (Bataan); Don Gala Elementary School (Parañaque); Espiritu Santo Parochial School (Manila); Gabaldon Elementary School (Lasag City); Gov. P.F. Espiritu Elementary School (Cavite); Jose Magsaysay Elementary School (Makati); Legarda Elementary School (Manila); Nemesio I. Yabut Elementary School (Makati); Nellie E. Brown Elementary School (Olongapo); Soldiers Hills IV Elementary School (Cavite); Tuloy sa Don Bosco School (Alabang)

Legend of the Pony's Tears was the fourth story in the Inquirer in Education Serial Reading program sponsored by Bench.

Thank you, Bench for your commitment to support the Inquirer in Education program.

INQUIRER IN EDUCATION

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Biz Buzz: Holiday belt-tightening /B2
■ Gov't expects P7.6B more from 'sin' taxes /B3

Editor Raul O. Morales • Assistant Editor Cecile S. Mariano

BUSINESS

SSS expects P16.5B in amnesty payments

By Konrad W. Domingo

THE SOCIAL Security System expects to collect a total of P16.5 billion in short-term loan payments this year as it kicks off today another amnesty program for delinquent employers.

Emilio de Quiros Jr., SSS president and chief executive, said in a statement that the projected amount includes P2.1 billion in overdue amortizations from such employers.

This means regular short-term loan payments are expected to reach P14 billion, equaling the amount recorded in 2010.

"Reducing the loan delinquency of members is a top priority of SSS," De Quiros said. "We offer the six-month amnesty program to employers since employed members make up an overwhelming majority of member loan accounts."

The new amnesty program, which will end on June 30, will benefit employees with overdue loans taken out under current or previous employers or when they were self-employed or voluntary members.

A previous amnesty program covered SSS employees, self-employed and voluntary members for loans payments due between May 2008 and December 2009.

De Quiros said the SSS collected a total of P919.8 million in principal and interest payments from that amnesty program, which was in force last year.

He said the new program for employers covers salary, calamity, emergency, educational, stock investment and petroleum loan loans.

He said unpaid loans incur continuing interest and monthly penalties of one percent, but that employers can choose to pay in full or in installments of up to 24 months, which carry a 3-percent annual interest.

"The SSS will waive penalties on delinquent loan amortizations due on or before April 1, 2011, which is in accordance with guidelines approved by Malacañang last June 2," De Quiros said.

"Penalties on loan amortizations due fall due after April 1 of last year are not covered by the loan condonation program," he said.

Employers applying for amnesty must be up to date in paying remittances to have their loan penalties condoned, De Quiros added.

Ty group raises investments in energy sector

By Amy R. Borres

THE FAMILY of tycoon George S.K. Ty plans to invest $1G1 million or roughly P52 billion over the next four years in three more RP-registered coal-fired power plants in the Visayas.

Through Global Business Power Corp., the energy unit of the Metrobank group, the family targets to increase its investments in the power generation sector in the Visayas to support the anticipated growth of the island's energy requirements.

"The need for power in the Visayas region will continue to grow, especially with the expected uptrend in the economy. Additional generating capacity must be made available to sustain this growth," said Metrobank corporate secretary Alfred Ty.

According to the younger Ty, the family is banking at adding two 82-MW plants in Toledo City in Cebu, and another 82-MW plant in La Paz, Iloilo City.

These projects, which are targeted to be completed by 2015, would add another 246 MW to new capacity to the Cebu-Negros-Panay grid.

Global Business Power recently completed its three-holler 246-MW clean coal power plant in Toledo City through Cebu Energy Development Corp., a consortium put up with Abaatz Power Corp., Visayan Energy Corp. and Kansai Electric Power Co. of Taiwan.

The family also has investments in Panay Energy Development Corp. (PEDC), which is on track with its 164-MW power plant in Iloilo City. PEDC's two 82-MW power units will both be online with the Cebu-Negros-Panay grid in the first quarter of this year.

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Dec. 30, 2010

43.840

Decline

STOCK MARKET

Dec. 30, 2010

1.83

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Upbeat trade seen ahead

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Holiday belt-tightening

YES THE season to be merry, but many employees of this particular big corporate—a local conglomerate that had experienced a dramatic changing of the guard in 2010—are not too jolly after they lost many of the coveted perks that they used to enjoy under their old bosses.

For one, the employees of this utility firm did not receive the usual stock options that they took forward to each year. As the company's stock price has risen steadily, it wasn't deemed practical to hand out precious equity—especially since the new group leading the company had painted a rosy picture (a lower strike price) paired with a hefty price to become the single biggest stockholder in the company.

Employees also fretted about smaller Christmas bonuses.

And instead of the usual department Christmas parties, they were held on weekdays each year, the management decided to consolidate all parties into one big party and hold it on a weekend to ensure there would be no disruption to operations.

But what was puzzling to many was that the new big boss broke the staple tradition of giving a Christmas speech during the party. Either the big boss didn't want to be crowded into hearing the sulfa prior just or wasn't too comfy speaking before a crowd that still had strong feelings of affection (and loyalty) for his predecessor.

This is, however, not a zero-sum game. While many employees reflects some critics may have spoiled for so long) may feel like scrubbing under a stronger leadership, the belt-tightening is a focus to shareholders who expect the new management to unlock more value for their investment in this company. In fact, this austerity program isn't entirely unexpected. *Doris C. Bautista*

Tipping point

ALMOST a year after it was formally launched, the Alphaland Emerald, joint Tower of Roberto V. Ongpin's Alphaland Corp. finally has an anchor tenant—the US-based Teleperformance.

The business process outsourcing firm recently sealed a deal to occupy four floors of the tower's 20 stories. Since it will occupy at least 20 percent of the available office space, Teleperformance was given naming rights to the building (this explains the company's neon signs mounted on the building's roof and the huge [illegible] facing—at night—front high—on either side of the structure).

In addition to an estimated 600 seated contact employees, Teleperformance will also locate its regional headquarters at the former epicenter that was first put up in the early 1980s.

Alphaland is now hoping that Teleperformance's decision to locate its offices at the Southgate Tower will be the tipping point that will bring in other tenants familiar to what 30 Rockefeller and the Enterprise Center in Makati were through with long periods of vacancy after they were launched).

Teleperformance's offices at Alphaland will commence operations today. *Jason L. Lozo*

Round 2 for ex-Citibankers

ALIZE set for the second grand reunion of ex-Citibankers in the Philippines. The affair to be hosted by Philippine National Bank president Eugenio Acevedo on Jan. 8 at the PNB headquarters.

Close to 300 ex-Citibankers, consisting of banking and corporate honchos, have so far confirmed their attendance, but the organizers are anticipating a crowd of over 400.

The very first reunion last year, after all, drew in 364 participants to the successful party hosted by then Development Bank of the Philippines president Reynaldo David.

"It's time to rekindle old ties with fellow ex-Citibankers and to participate in a program specially prepared for this occasion. It's also a time to express our gratitude to the institution once celebrating its 100th year and a time to show our care and generosity for fellow ex-Citibankers who are in need of assistance and help," the club's invitation says.

Also invited to the ex-Citibankers' reunion are current Citibankers hired from 1999 and earlier, as well as the children and spouses of ex-Citibankers.

Alumni who had resigned from and returned to work at Citibank are also invited. *Boots C. Bautista*

Businessmen in government

FOLLOWING the recent appointment of Jose Cuisia as Philippine ambassador to the US, other businessmen who are staunch supporters of the Aquino administration are expected to be named to important government posts this year.

One is former Ambassador to the US Albert del Rosario who is tipped to be named secretary of foreign affairs this month, replacing Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Amb. Del Rosario is a longtime ally of businessman Manuel Pangilinan who was a major contributor to the Aquino presidential campaign.

Another widely expected appointment is for the governorship of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which becomes vacant when Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.'s term ends in mid-2011.

The current favorite for the post is Bank of the Philippine Islands president Aurelio "Gigi" Montinola, who was an Aquino supporter during last year's polls.

Rapidly closing the gap, however, is P-Noy's former high school batchmate BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla, regarded by many bankers as a dark horse candidate.

Another key appointment the business community is waiting for is the President's choice for a point man for his public-private partnership (PPP) program, or possibly an executive director for Neda's PPP Center. *Dennis L. Lozo*

Anti-BSP campaign

WORD on the street is that there is an ongoing smear campaign against the BSP aimed at discrediting the institution ahead of the crucial naming of a new central bank governor this year.

The organized effort started with complaints about the alleged "seven" in the new peso bills.

This was followed by the emergence last week of reports about BSP's loss at the hands of its longtime nemesis, Banco Filipino, before the Makati Regional Trial Court. Strangely, the report surfaced only once a month after the decision was handed down by the judge.

Blow supposed "hit" against the central bank "will be made to surface" over the coming weeks," according to our sources. *Beatrix L. Lozano*

Meralco spending ₱45B in 4 yrs

By Amy R. Borja

MANILA ELECTRIC CO., the country's biggest power distribution player, to spend about P45 billion over the next four years for the strengthening of its distribution network and improvement of its services.

According to Meralco chief operating officer Oscar Reyes, the investment program will cover only the distribution system and the improvement and/or replacement of existing and new power lines and substations for the third regulatory period (2013 to 2015).

Reyes said the P45 billion represents the capital expenditure requirement of Meralco in order to meet the expected load growth in its franchise area, which currently serves more than 4.6 million customers in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

These investments are necessary to improve the quality of services as well as required by customers, he added.

"Our capex is driven by growth in demand and quality requirements of customers. It's driven by the need to ensure the efficiency of our distribution system. Our aspiration is to ensure that there will be no bottlenecks in our distribution system or franchise area, other than those caused by external factors or regular preventive maintenance," Reyes explained.

To fund the "aggressive" capital expenditure program, Reyes said Meralco has been tapping several funding facilities. The distribution utility is getting offers from various local and foreign banks, he added.

Over the last four weeks, Meralco was able to raise P13.5 billion from the local debt market to refinance existing obligations and fund future projects.

It recently secured a P3.5-billion loan from Philippine National Bank under a seven-year term agreement.

Meralco also signed a separate agreement for a P5-billion note facility with First Metro Investment Corp. acting as the arranger and bookrunner. The fixed rate notes, which were issued on Dec. 21, will fall due on 2015 and 2016.

Although the index pulled back from the record level of 4,408 last year, hopes are high that the bull run will continue in 2011.

"I think there will be continued buying on renewed optimism for the New Year," said Aaron del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

He said the index would likely hover between a range of 4,200 and 4,300 this week as the market attempts to form a base for future run-ups.

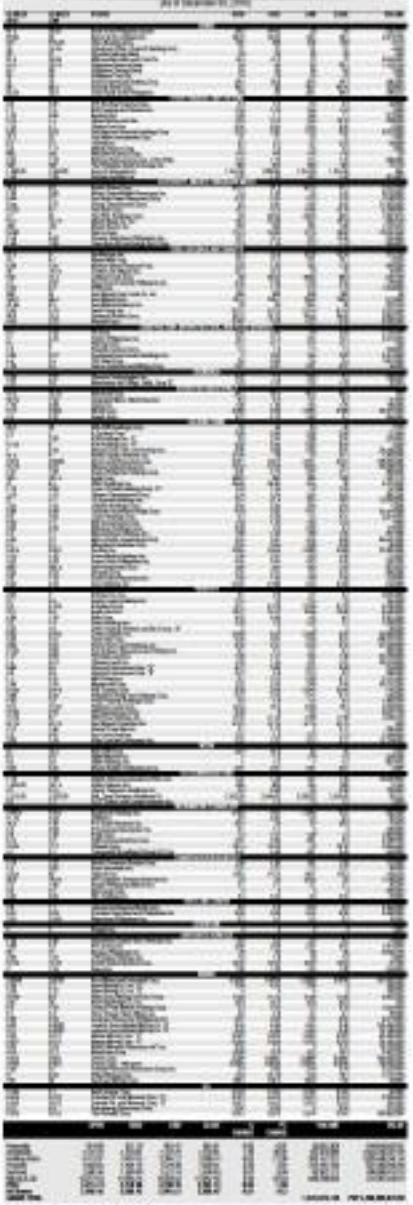
Del Castillo said a string of favorable domestic economic indicators would provide support to local equities.

"Inflation is manageable, interest rates are low and we have good economic growth," Del Castillo said. *Doris C. Bautista*

Upbeat trade seen ahead

Pantaleon B-1

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index gained 95.1 points, or nearly 1 percent, last week to finish at 4,261.14.



Gov't expects ₱7.6B more from 'sin' taxes

Bulk to come from tobacco products

By Bonnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT expects additional revenue of ₱7.6 billion from the last mandated increase in the excise taxes on alcohol and tobacco, under the Sin Tax Law of 2003, which took effect on Jan. 1.

Finance Undersecretary Gil S. Beltran said in an interview that based on 2009 consumption figures, tobacco products would represent 53 percent of the additional tax revenue collection that will accrue for the year.

Based on the government's excise tax collection program for 2011, Beltran said alcohol-based beverages would account for ₱11.5 billion or lower by 0.6 percent than the ₱12.6 billion collected in 2010.

Excise tax collection on tobacco products is programmed at ₱22.6 billion this year, 8.5 percent lower than the ₱25.4 billion last year.

Beltran said it was observed that companies "overload" their shipments at the end of the year before a scheduled increase in excise taxes in the coming year. This means that shipments are made in advance to avoid paying higher taxes.

Under Republic Act No. 9334 or the Sin Tax Law passed in 2005, the levy on cigarettes and alcohol vary in rates depending on price classifications.

The tax rates rise every two years starting 2005 or every time until 2011 when the cumulative increases reach 20 percent.

The law states that the minimum increase for alcohol is 8 percent while that for tobacco is 6 percent.

"The Department of Finance's position is that the sin tax should be harmonized so there should be a single rate," Beltran said. "The current law is so confusing that even the implementers get confused."

He said there should be a new law by 2013, preferably one that simplifies the sin tax scheme and curb resulting in higher taxes.

Data from the Bureau of Internal Revenue show that in the 10 months to October, collection of excise tax on alcohol reached ₱17.5 billion or 2.3 percent higher year-on-year.

Also, collection of excise tax on tobacco reached ₱23.1 billion or 13.7 percent higher.

After hammering out CBA, PLDT workers eye windfall

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL TELECOMMUNICATION giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has swiftly struck what was described by the company chief as a "solid and mutually acceptable" collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with its employees.

"It strikes the right balance. Employees get substantial benefits. PLDT maintains a competitive structure that enables it to stay ahead in an increasingly tough and very competitive market," PLDT president and chief executive officer Napoleon Nazareno said in a statement.

The CBA negotiations between PLDT management and the Dalaga ng Bayan Sa Telekomunikasyon ng Pilipinas Supervisor (DABTEL) union completed in nine meetings.

PLDT president Charles A. Acevedo said the provisions in the agreement were substantial enough for the needs of PLDT supervisors.

"The provisions of both parties were met. The bargainers were substantial. I think the PLDT management was very reasonable and they laid down the cards they would play. That helped us finish the negotiations easily," Acevedo said.

The CBA provides for an 8-percent monthly wage increase or ₱1,000, whichever is higher, for 2011. For 2012 and 2013, there will be a 6-percent wage increase or ₱1,000, whichever is higher.

Likewise part of the package were the ₱50,000 goodwill signing bonus and a ₱40,000 expedition agreement bonus.

PLDT human resources head Ruth Jimenez Jr. credited the leaders of DABTEL led by Acevedo and the management negotiating panel headed by PLDT first vice president Emiliano S. Yanchuy for the successful CBA negotiations.

PLDT is the country's most valuable company with a market capitalization of ₱475.6 billion at the stock market. It employs around 13,000 workers.

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The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

- Bid Submission Deadline — January 17, 2011 (3 PM)
- Evaluation of Commercial & Technical Proposals — January 18, 2011
- Selection of First Negotiable Bidder — January 19, 2011
- Execution of Contract — January 24, 2011
- Mine Site Visit — to be scheduled if necessary

Bids must be delivered to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) in the office of IEPCO as indicated in the address below no later than 3 PM of January 17, 2011. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Bond in accordance with the prescribed forms and amounts stated in the Bid Documents.

IEPCO reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to awarding of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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peacefully joined her husband Modesto J. Mapeso, JrMJ last December 27, 2010.

Her children Joy, Grace and Franklin Quimpo, Augustus and Flora, Macky and Raechel Tumlos-Jun, Modesto Jr. & Josie, grandchildren, Ting, Kris Bernal, Francis Nicolli and Nina Marr, Eve, Nico, Quincy and Mako; relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment at Kalibo Catholic Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the St. John the Baptist Cathedral on January 07, 2011.

MARIA TIONGSON TORRES
December 11, 1931 – January 1, 2011

Her loving husband, FELIMON; children and children-in-law: TE and DAVE, JEAN, RAYMUND and JOANNE; grandchildren NICOLE, ANGELO, ANDREA and JOSEPH; and relatives request readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Ascension Chapels by Arlington, #132 D. Aranza Avenue cor. Bailey Street, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 8, 2011 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

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Who cried with you or calmed you,
For those who gave their prayers...

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OBITUARIES

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CORDILLERA
exerts
a boost in
infrastructure
spending.

MANPOWER and Pangasinan see an increase in employment in 2010.

2010 has been good for Baguio City.

Investor confidence in Luzon high for 2011

By Inquirer Northern Luzon and Inquirer Central Luzon

In 2010, the economy of Central Luzon recovered from the previous year's slump, according to the regional office of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

But because employment increased by 143,000—a development that reduced the unemployment rate from 9.4 percent to 9 percent, with the bulk of 3.72 million employed belonging to the services sector.

"Although the labor situation was much better in 2010 compared to 2009, the recovery was not enough to land the region at the planned target of achieving an unemployment rate of 6.6 percent in 2010," the Neda said in an assessment report.

It said the positive development is expected to continue in 2011. The success of growth rate, the impact of the past stimulus spending, especially on the service sector, the resupplying of government expenditure on firms and capital projects, the release of government funds in the last quarter of 2010, and the general buildup of private sector confidence in government brought about by the high level of integrity and trust in President Benigno C. Aquino III.

Drop in inflation

Average inflation in the past 11 months dropped to 3.02 percent from 3.6 percent in 2009, National Statistics Office data showed. The inflation rates, for had, effectively and worst, however, did not decline.

For instance, employment increased by 143,000—a development that reduced the unemployment rate from 9.4 percent to 9 percent, with the bulk of 3.72 million employed belonging to the services sector.

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RICE production is up in Central Luzon.

Inquirer Northern Luzon and Inquirer Central Luzon

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Tarlac, Pangasinan and Nueva Ecija increased their rice production by 7 percent, 3.4 percent and 2.14 percent, respectively. Nueva Ecija produced nearly half of the 49.7 percent of total regional production. Central Luzon contributes 22 percent to the national rice supply.

However, corn production in the region fell to 174,393 metric tons (MT) in the first six months of 2010 from 180,261 MT during the same period in 2009.

The Department of Agriculture in the region traced the low growth in palay and the drop in corn production to the prolonged dry spell.

At the same time, however, the region drew in more domestic tourists while overseas travel the number of international visitors during the period.

Neda also revealed that foreign direct investments (FDIs) at the Clark Freeport as of October reached P164.2 billion, which is four times bigger than those made in 2009. It said FDIs at the Subic Bay Freeport, meanwhile, totaled P4.76 billion during the period.

"There's more confidence now in so far as investing money for business enterprises is concerned," said Kenny Ramada, president of the Nueva Ecija Chamber of Commerce and Industries (NECCI).

"Before, investors were afraid that their hard-earned money would just go to waste because of the not-so-good business climate. It is a different story now," he said.

Ramada said it is apparent that Mr. Aquino brought confidence in the business community when he assumed office in July. He predicted that food processing, furniture and wall production are companies that will start to flourish in Nueva Ecija.

In the meantime, the highest **poor economic performance** in 2009 led both economists to expect slight improvements in 2010 and 2011, as its political leaders have decided to rely on their strengths to create an autonomous region instead.

Baguio City Mayor Mauricio Domogan had been hosting fora for Cordillera stakeholders toward the end of 2010, to draw inputs for a draft autonomy measure he was tasked to put together before March 2011.

He said the measure must pass through Congress for ratification before Oct. and elections in 2011, in order to Cordilleras that the measure has not been tainted by partisan interests.

The third bid for autonomy was pushed by the Cordillera Regional Development Council as far back as 2008.

Members of the RDC argue that the Cordillera needs a steady government subsidy for a limited period to improve its infrastructure, instead of competing with other regions for funding allocations from the national budget.

The 1987 Constitution requires the creation of autonomous regions in the Cordillera and Muslim Mindanao. The first two laws creating the Cordillera autonomous Region provide a 10-year subsidy of as much as P50 billion.

The third proposed autonomy law pushed for subsidy is P75 billion.

In July 2008, Ifugao recorded a slide in the area's gross regional domestic product from the 7.1 percent of 2007 to only 1.6 percent one years ago. The Cordillera economy improved slightly in 2009 during which Ifugao recorded a growth rate of 2 percent.

But as RDC last shred took stock of the dwindling economic contribution of leisure industry leaders like tasting.

Government was also unable to fulfill a public private sector pledge to restore materials roads (economic) of the landslides has been triggered by typhoons in 2008.

Lack of government spending

In 2010 roads, most of these damaged roads remain in dystopic, owing to low government spending, according to the Department of Public Works and Highways.

There are signs, however, that 2010 has been good for the region. For the last three quarters of 2010, the Department of Trade and Industry recorded P1.6 billion worth of investments. Close to P1 billion of these investments were posted from Baguio, which hosts the Baguio City Economic Zone and the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone.

In Pangasinan, business in Dagupan City and adjoining towns is expected to boom in 2011 with the city set to dropping mall giants SM in Dagupan and Robinsons in Calasiao soon.

More malls

A Robinsons mall is already under construction in Calasiao while SM will also to overcome obstacles like the extension of a major road and the conversion of the site's land use permit from that of a fishpond to commercial land.

"If these problems are resolved, I don't foresee of any reason for more delays. If Dagupan will not have it, [SM] will open is somewhere else so we might as well grab it," Mayor Benjamin Lim said.

While Lim's family owns real estate in the city and different businesses, his son, Bryan, said the entry of SM and Robinsons is "good for the competition."

"We will just have to come up with a good marketing plan to be able to compete. Besides, the retails laborers of SM would bring up the prices of land in the eastern resurgence and that would be good for landowners," the younger Lim said.

Mayor Lim, however, is worried that the extension of the North Luzon Expressway through the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Link Dolan Expressway (SCTEX) that will pass through eastern Pangasinan and the establishment of the Aluminum airport project in western Pangasinan may negate the growth of central Pangasinan.

Expressway

"The question is, how do we access the expressway from Ilagan on from central part of the province? The expressway will benefit only Urdaneta City and part of the fifth and sixth districts," he said.

"With an airport in the west and an expressway in the east, central Pangasinan could be left behind economically unless there is a road network to pass through central Pangasinan that will link the Aluminum airport to the expressway on its eastern," he said.

Lim said 2011 will be a positive year for many businessmen because of the new government and the confidence to the Aquino administration.

"It is expected that investments frustrated will continue, President Aquino has made a pitch for the Philippines already as the tanning, manufacturing and agriculture [sectors will experience a] surge in investment and money inflow from abroad," he said.

"The coming field is level now. The national government does not favor anyone, so everybody is [favored] in partnering with [them] in building roads, bridges, highways, airports, seaports and schools," he said.

Reports from Nonette Orejas and Andrew Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon, and Vincent Cabreza and Rodelio Aviado, Inquirer Northern Luzon

DMIA expects an increase in business in 2011.

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Entrepreneurs' Guide to Married Couples Working Together (1:30pm-5:00pm)

January 12, 2011
Branding Your Product (9:00am-12:00noon)
Internet Marketing (1:30pm-4:30pm)

January 21, 2011
Mentoring Your People (8:00am-12:00noon)
Financial Statement Analysis Made Easy (1:30pm-4:30pm)

January 29, 2011
Professionalizing Your Sales Calls (8:00am-12:00noon)
Effective Persuasion (1:30pm-4:30pm)

February 4, 2011
Handling Sales Objections (8:00am-12:00noon)
Selling to Supermarkets, Groceries and Sari-Sari Stores (1:30pm-4:30pm)

February 11, 2011
Service Marketing (9:00am-12:00noon)
Retail Profit Strategy (1:30pm-4:30pm)

February 16, 2011
Arsenal of Business Success and Failures (9:00am-12:00noon)
Competing to Win (1:30pm-4:30pm)

February 23, 2011
Effective Leadership (9:00am-12:00noon)
Effective Coaching (1:30pm-4:30pm)

March 2, 2011
Effective Business Execution (9:00am-12:00noon)
Effective People Skills (1:30pm-4:30pm)

March 9, 2011
Internal Control to Preserve Your Wealth (9:00am-12:00noon)
Effective Customer Service (1:30pm-4:30pm)

March 15, 2011
Strategic Innovation (9:00am-12:00noon)
Reinventing Your Business Strategy (1:30pm-4:30pm)

March 23, 2011
Choosing Market Segments (9:00am-12:00noon)
Evaluating Market Attractiveness (1:30pm-4:30pm)

March 29, 2011
Finding Your Next Big Opportunity (9:00am-12:00noon)
Marketing without TV Advertising (1:30pm-4:30pm)

Venue:
Waltermart Pasay Road, Makati

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INFOTECH

APPLE Inc. CEO Steve Jobs holds up the iconic iPad during an Apple event in Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, California. AFP

Tablet computers come of age with iPad mania

SAN FRANCISCO—It is an innovation-limited gadget bigger than a smartphone but smaller than a laptop that makes tablet computing a defining trend for 2010.

The iPad, which Apple launched in April last year, became the most-have device of 2010. Rivals are now intent on dethroning the runaway-selling Cupertino company before it can lock in the market the way iPods became the ruling MP3 players.

"Apple nailed it and made tablet computers a success," said Gartner analyst Ken Dulaney. "There are going to be a lot of people trying to beat them, but it will become the iPads; everybody wants one."

Setting the stage

Internet Age debut pits net-like usage for the crack-pot debut of a tablet computer done right, according to Forrester Research analyst Sarah Rotman Epps.

Web works have grown steadily longer with the proliferation of gadgets keeping people connected to homes and offices and weekends.

"Consumers are working all the time, have less leisure time and less money to spend but still want to maximize enjoyment they get out of life," Rotman Epps told AFP. "Tablets fit that moment for devices that fill those in-between moments and minimize your unconnected time."

Forrester data shows that 16 percent of US consumers who bought iPads use the tablets for work as well as personal purposes.

"The type sport for eating an iPad is the living room, with the bedroom being the second most common, Forrester said.

"People are using tablets to read the Wall Street Journal or watch TV in bed," Rotman Epps said. "It is replacing, in some circumstances, laptop computers, television and print media."

Apple benefited by forming an equally popular instead of businesses, adding to big cache and having real-world stories where people used to study before commuting to Starbucks, according to Rotman Epps.

Cracking the market

"Apple cracked the market that others had struggled with for years," said Gartner analyst Michael Gartenberg.

Research shows that owners of the Apple tablets consume more video, news and other content online than other people do.

Some analysts expect iPad sales will blast past the 1.0 million mark this month, if they haven't already, and competitors are hoping the market with their own tablets or have announced plans to do so.

Samsung said its Galaxy Tab, which will run on Google's Android software, has sold one million units, Microsoft unveiled its tablet a "priority" and BlackBerry maker Research in Motion plans one next year named the PlayBook.

Forrester predicted that by 2015, the number of US consumers using tablet computers will be 760 million, more than outlook says but less than the number of people using smartphones or laptops.

The tablet trend will put downward pressure on laptop computer prices, based on industry research, making consumers think it's not worth paying a lot more to get a laptop instead of a tablet.

"Tablets really changed consumer thinking about mobile computing and the industry's thinking," said Forrester analyst Charles Golvin.

Analysts said other big electronics stories of the year were the continued growth of smartphones and Microsoft's Kinect, the Xbox 360 video-game console that players control using gestures and spoken commands.

Microsoft said it sold more than 2.1 million Kinects for Xbox 360 devices worldwide in 25 days after they hit the market.

Hot mobile market

Google, meanwhile, said more than 300,000 smartphones running its Android software are activated daily as it builds momentum in its hot mobile market.

According to research firm Gartner, Finland's Nokia sold 28.5 million smartphones during the third quarter of the year for a 36.6 percent share of the worldwide market, down from 44.6 percent a year ago.

Sales of Android-powered smartphones soared to 20.5 million units, giving the Android platform a 25.5 percent market share, up from just 3.9 percent a year ago, Gartner said.

Apple's iPhone was once with sales reaching 13.5 million units, followed by Canada's Research In Motion, maker of the BlackBerry, with sales of 11.9 million units. Sales of Microsoft's Windows Mobile hit 2.2 million units. AFP

LG to introduce world's largest full LED 3D TV

LG ELECTRONICS (LG) will unveil the 72-inch LZ9700, the world's largest full LED-backlight LED 3D TV, at the Consumer Electronics Show 2011 in Las Vegas on Jan. 6.

The LZ9700 gives viewers life-sized action with beautifully crisp picture in both 2D and 3D.

The LZ9700 is illuminated by a full panel of LEDs directly behind the screen, producing pictures as colorful as paint tops in an art gallery. The extra spacious Full LED screen size also makes the picture more expansive than ever, enabling viewers to experience superb picture quality with detailed images on big as 72 inches.

Further enhancing the experience, the LZ9700 offers comfortable 3D viewing. Combining the world's largest full LED screen, the LZ9700's 3D takes an added depth and drama viewers even further into an extraordinary viewing experience.

In addition, TruMotion 400Hz delivers a super-fast processing rate for exceptionally smooth 3D images.

"The LZ9700 combines the ultimate in LG's picture quality with our latest developments in 3D TV" said Hanh Kwon, president and CEO of LG Home Entertainment Co. "With the LZ9700, LG is poised to take the lead in the TV market."

This state-of-the-art TV is also fitted with LG's Smart TV functions. Via a simple Home Dashboard, this smart TV delivers premium content from local and global providers of shows and movies.

It also provides access to LG's growing collection of TV apps, which offer everything from language classes to games. And thanks to LG's intuitive and easy-to-use Magic Motion Remote Control, the LZ9700's numerous functions are easy to find and operate.

The LZ9700 will be available to customers in early 2011.

Kaspersky tightens security with new cloud service

THE INTERNET cloud is an enabling phenomenon that has yet to reach its promised potential.

Simplify a cloud is a global network that provides an array of services, anywhere from hosting files and storing data to providing easy web support and resources such as software.

People effectively turn to the cloud whenever they open their e-mail accounts on Yahoo or Gmail, download software or back up their files at a storage website.

At present, cloud services target big businesses are on the rise, said Steven Beagley, director of cloud services for Kaspersky Lab Asia Pacific region. The services appeal to customers because of certain advantages.

Companies that avail of cloud services stand to gain up to 50 per cent in cost savings since they are not required to buy the software and install it on their systems, Beagley said. They only need to pay for the software that is hosted someplace else.

He refers to this model as software as a service. Email, where companies rent or subscribe to the application that is running on their servers.

To help companies secure their systems from threats without spending much, Kaspersky Lab recently came out with its detachable flag-called frequently blocked boosting function.

The new security product is an integrated offering that ensures a dual level of internet and mail traffic to business environments, handling the entry of e-mail, web and blended threats.

Beagley said the product would reduce the total cost of ownership (TCO) by delivering enhanced services while decreasing the maintenance burden on the organization's IT department.

The subscription model makes costs predictable, eradicating hidden maintenance charges and unexpected upgrade costs, he added.

"The Philippines is a high growth market for hosted services especially since it has a fast developing business process outsourcing industry and a fast-growing BPO sector that needs to be the backbone of its economy, which all require heavy online usage as they do business," said Beagley.

He said the growth of the industry plus the sensitivity of data would compel companies to operate under the cloud environment.

AnnSec feature is the Kaspersky Hosted E-mail Security, which can dramatically reduce incoming mail traffic by filtering out unwanted content. It can also lower required resources bandwidth, storage capacity and mail server's load. It also has a built-in spam quality system to deal with excessive spam.

The new service is designed to ensure that employees accessing the Internet are not affected by malware and other unwanted content that may jeopardize the integrity of their systems, jeopardize system resources and hinder employee productivity, Beagley said. Manuel P. Torres

A DSLR that inspires creativity

Text and photos by Eugene Asuncion

NIKON recently introduced the D7000, its latest premium DSLR camera for both amateur and professional photographers.

The camera blends the features of the Nikon D90 and D300 models.

With a body made of magnesium alloy plus impact-resistant and dust-resistant and dust-resistant and dust

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

THE GREAT PENSHOPPE SALE
JANUARY 3-15, 2011

The never-ending song of the indestructible Sylvia la Torre

The US-based 'Queen of Kundiman' was home recently for the 'Laro' concert of the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band and showed everyone she remains vibrant and ageless

By Tao Rejano-Maniebo
Contributor

PERFORMANCE level.

It has become an absurd and misused phrase to denote an over-the-top action, reaction or even an overdone manner of dressing. It has almost become synonymous to dramatic entertaining of just about anything.

And just like many other words or phrases whose roots have been forgotten, true performance level can only be found in those that originated it. Performers like Sylvia la Torre, the Queen of Kundiman from the '50s and '60s, who, at the benevolent age of 77, emerged camera-ready from a 12- or more hour Eight Fresh Los Angeles spot landing at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Coiffed hair in signature flip-and-twist style, penciled eyebrows arched high that the origin of "pataray ang kilay" (raise the eyebrow; please) can probably be attributed to her, Ms La Torre, upon gentle cajoling from the welcome party, became quite a few verses of "Sa Kabukiran" and left the rest of the Indiras as a teaser to the show she flew in for.

La Torre was here to grace the annual concert of the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band, composed of multigifted children ages 7-22. Since the band's inception in 2010, and revitalized in 2004, members of the 77-piece orchestra have determinedly serenaded music aficionados every single Saturday, amidst the groans and wildes of local organic shop-and-eat.

Intensive five-in-summer music camps where curriculum includes sight reading, musicianship, harmony, solo instrument and ensemble play take place every year. Annual benefit evening concerts are held at Bis Book well now, or, more recently, the RCBC auditorium. But this year, as attributed by Maja Oliveros Co, executive director of the Young Musicians Development Organization, the foundation that supports the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band, showcase hit the bright lights of the

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY IN

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

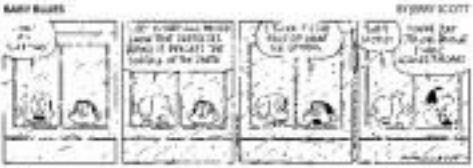
A-LIPAS — BY JOEL MERINA

PUGAD BABOY — BY PAUL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEBYTES — BY ELIZABETH CHONGUO

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT



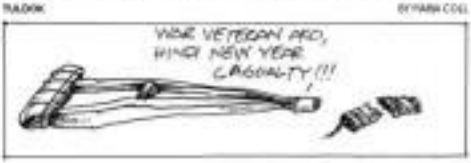
RIBO MACHINE — BY HANS ASBEN

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

EYRA — BY ED BELO & ED BAYOS

SHERMAN'S LAGOON — BY JIM TOOMEY

TULOKH — BY HANA COLL



Lasing: making no money on ECTS 409 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Loans hanging Style tips

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) This is the perfect time for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

ARIES (March 21 to April 20) This is the perfect time for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

TAURUS (April 21 to May 20) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) This is perhaps the best time of the year for you to finish what you like best how to approach it. It's the best time of the year, and it's a New Moon.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) What resolutions can you make to improve your friendships and partnerships? These people are important to you. How can you improve the way you relate with them?

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Today is the day to think about how you can improve your health. What can you do differently to improve your health? What can you do differently to improve your health? What can you do differently to improve your health?

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Do you think you have a healthy, balanced relationship with your money? Or do you have a love-hate relationship with it?

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) What can you do to improve your relationships? What can you do to improve your relationships? What can you do to improve your relationships?

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Is it time to get back into the swing of things? Have you been neglecting your social life? Is it time to get back into the swing of things?

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Is it important to stay in touch with your spiritual beliefs? Even if you don't think you have any, you do. What is there?

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) This is the time to focus on friendships and groups in your life. These relationships are important to you. What can you do to improve them?

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) This is the time to focus on friendships and groups in your life. These relationships are important to you. What can you do to improve them?

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) This is the time to focus on friendships and groups in your life. These relationships are important to you. What can you do to improve them?

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and go figures at www.sudoku.com

Conceptis Sudoku

	1			8			2	
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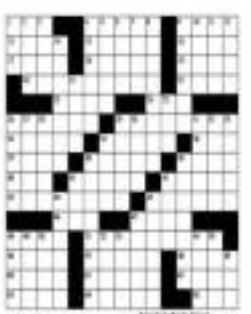
CROSSWORD PUZZLE



FOUR actors will play 'Til classes two in Repertory Philippines' cast-wheelchair-bound ex-skilled Michael in contemporary, "The 39 Steps," March 4-20.

CRIS VILLONZA, JOSHUA JAMES, PAOLA MARQUEZ, JOE ONG, FRANCIS HALILI (pictured) play members and daughters in "The Joy Luck Club," directed by Antoni Jaia, Feb. 4-20.

AMANDA Okumura and Pooh and up on a Hollywood set in the comedy, "Shakespeare in Hollywood," April 1-17.

SAM Concepcion in play "Peter Pan," Sept. 29-Oct. 30.

For 2011, Rep to stage 'Joy Luck Club' and '39 Steps'

By Walter Ang
Contributor

"WE'VE PREPARED for exciting selection of shows that are easy to stimulate Shakespeare," said Repertory Philippines new associate artistic director Mendez Lucchesgon Sylo.

Immediately joint associate artistic director Ava Vivero will remain as a member of the board of directors. Bobo Rivera's remains as the artistic director.

"Rhoda has been with Rep since she was a teenager and has developed into one of the finest all-around actresses in the Philippines," said Vivero. "She has also become a great director. She is a natural-born director manager. But, most important of all...she is passionate about theater and her loyalty and love for Rep is unquestionable."

Rep's 2011 line-up starts off with its "season shows."

Based on the novel by Amy Tan, "The Joy Luck Club," to be directed by Antoni Jaia, features the stories of four Chinese immigrant women and their American-born daughters.

"It's a great production to start off 2011, especially since it will be from Feb. 4-20, which is great for Valentine's dates and by celebrating the Chinese New Year," Sylo said.

Next is a comedy thriller based on an Alfred Hitchcock masterpiece, "The 39 Steps" (March 4-20, 2011), to be directed by Jaia Alvad Santos, has "over 150 zany characters played by a cast of four."

Sub-says, "There will be nonstop laughs as audiences witness stunning fingers, a plane crash, and some good old-fashioned romance!"

From April 1-17, 2011, audiences can catch the comedy "Shakespeare in Hollywood," to be directed by Jaime del Mundo. Shakespeare's novel Dionne Savios, Oberon and Puck, end up on the Hollywood set of Max Reinhardt's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Smitten by the glitz and glamour of show biz, "they encounter Studio Soundbells, movie moguls, arrogant stars, and, yes, a feisty flower as they find out which script best Kingdom that end with movies reality," says Sylo.

Children's theater

For its Children's Theatre from Aug. 13-Oct. 31, 2011, Rep will stage one of the most perfected shows in America: "Tuesdays."

Tony award winners Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty ("Ragtime" and "Once On This Island"), created the lyrics, music and book of this musical that brings to life the characters from the popular Dr. Seuss books.

"Seussical" is a humorous, magical, musical celebration with all of our favorite Dr. Seuss characters, including "Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, Lazy Mayzie and Jojo, a little boy with a big imagination," says Sylo.

"The show will run for only one hour and 10 minutes. The perfect length for younger audiences. Children and their parents will enjoy seeing all those characters from the Jungle of Nool, the Circus McGurkus and the terrible world of the Whos."

2011 yearend big musical

Rep's year big musicals have included "Sweeney Todd," "Tunes of Music" and "Fiddler on the Roof." "Peter Pan" will be its yearend big musical from Sept. 29-Oct. 30, 2011, with Sam Concepcion in the title role, to be directed by Jaime del Mundo and Rhoda Lucchesgon-Sylo.

"Sam (the boy who doesn't want to grow up, Peter Pan, and his adventures with the Darling siblings Wendy, John and Michael as they battle Captain Hook and his pirates in a world filled with lovelies, mermaids, Indians and many other interesting characters," says Palo.

Pitch music by George Stiles and lyrics by Anthony Drew ("Honk!" and Disney's "Mary Poppins"), Peter Pan will be a co-production with troupe theaters company.

"It's going to be a spectacular musical where the actors will fly right before the audiences' eyes," she says.

Rep's co-Peter Pan," which will be staged at the Meralco Theater, all Rep. performances will be at Onstage Theater.

"Meralco Theater is across the street from Robinsons Galleria Mall while Onstage Theater is inside Greenbelt 3 Mall," says Sylo. "This gives our audiences opportunities to do other things with their families or friends before or after watching our shows."

Rep membership manager Rose Jimenez said they announced their line-up and show schedules early so that those who'd like to save extra income for themselves or raise funds for their theater company can plan ahead for 2011.

"The arts can be profitable!" he says, "all our productions are available for shareholding and block ticket sales for individuals or groups."

All productions are also available for sponsorships and is to reach Rep's audiences," he says. "Endorse-College is sponsoring Rep for the entire year. Not only do they leverage Rep's reputation for quality shows to secure our audiences. Rep gets their support of theater, they also secure to a portion of the arts. We're inviting companies or individuals to receive the same opportunities in sponsoring Repertory Philippines that Endorse-College is getting."

Call Repertory Philippines at 57-16928, 57-4044 or email to info@repertory-philippines.com. Tickets also available at Ticketworld at 891-9999 or www.ticketworld.com.ph.

"SEUSSICAL," a musical featuring characters from the beloved books by Dr. Seuss, runs Aug. 13-Dec. 31.

'Next to Normal' from Atlantis Productions in March 2011

ATLANTIS PRODUCTIONS, which celebrated its 2011 Season with hit productions of "Avenue Q," "Legally Blonde," "Xanadu" and the Manila and Singapore runs of "A Little Night Music," opens its 2011 Season with the Tony Award- and Pulitzer-winning rock musical "Next to Normal," set to run March 11-27, 2011 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati.

Rhoda Lucchesgon-Palo (as Diana, one of Philippine theater's the area's most accomplished actresses, and rock star theatre actor Jett Pangan (as Dan) star in this production. They take on two of the most demanding roles written for musical theatre, originated on the Broadway stage by Tony Award-winning actress Alice Ripley and Hudson Spencer.

Other cast members include Felix Rivera as Gabe, this time in a Filipino and Bindki Imperial as Henry.

In "Next to Normal," Tom Kitt (music) and Brian Yorkey (book/lyrics) pose a woman's lifelong struggle with bipolar disorder and depression, many steps—in a musical. The two earned the 2009 Tony Award for Best Score and the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for their work.

"Without 'Rent' and Stephen Sondheim, there is no 'Next to Normal,'" Kitt and Yorkey said, in an interview with Playbill.com following their Pulitzer Prize win.

"We've always been moved and inspired to write material that maybe says something a little different through musical theatre. I think in the very beginning, when we set out to write this, we just wanted to write something that mattered to us, something that felt relative that it hadn't been explored in musical theatre before. But never could we have imagined to our wildest dreams that we'd be here."

Production has critically acclaimed singing of "A Little Night Music" in Manila and Singapore, Bobby Garcia directs the Manila production of "Next to Normal," which is the first licensed English language production outside the United States.

Garcia says, "I am thrilled that Atlantis is opening 2011 with a show as groundbreaking and as powerful as 'Next to Normal.' It is one of the most unlikely hit musicals to have ever opened on a Broadway stage, and I am thrilled we will get to create our own unique, family for this production. When I saw 'Next to Normal' off-Broadway two years ago and on Broadway a few years, I was sure it was destined for the future of musical theatre."

The Manila production is presented through a special licensing agreement with Music Theatre International.

Showtimes are also now available for show-buying and fund-raising opportunities with excellent returns on investment. It is the perfect show to raise money for one's organization, foundation or charity.

"Next to Normal" runs March 11-27, 2011 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati. Call 9027051 or 8401187.

Ballet Philippines takes on 'Don Quixote' this year

BALLET PHILIPPINES takes a giant leap this February with a lavish and opulent production of the famous ballet classic, "Don Quixote, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP).

Derived from an episode of the novel by Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes, the adaptation follows an aging gentleman with delusions of being a knight-errant entering domestic in distress, and the adventures of young lovers Kitri and Basilio. The story culminates with the most popular dance duet in ballet history, the couple's grand pas de deux.

Don Quixote brings together the world's premiere and award-winning artists led by Honolulu Ballet's principal dancer, Connor Walsh, who will be performing alongside Ballet Philippines' lead dancers in a limited engagement in Manila on only five performances on Feb. 17-18.

Walsh was educated in some of the most renowned schools in America, including the Kirov Academy of Ballet, Harid Conservatory and Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy where he received the prestigious Rudolf Nureyev Foundation scholarship and the Ben Stevenson Scholarship awards.

In 2004, Walsh became the recipient of the first named gold award from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and the Award of Encouragement at the Shanghai International Ballet Competition.

Joining the stage alongside the acclaimed principal dancer is Philippines's very own gem, Candice Adea, silver medalist in the 2010 International Ballet Competition. Attracting wide attention in 2010 International Ballet Competitions around the stage and prized dancer Jean Marc Gaillard, while Katherine Trotter and Don Quixote, Michelle in Gillian Lynne's Fool on the Hill, and Valencia dancer in Helpmann's Merry Widow. She has, by invitation, taught at The Royal Danish Ballet, the Houston Ballet, and the Hong Kong Ballet.

The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, under the baton of conductor Maestro Silvio

CONNOR WALSH

Carissa Adea alternate as Kitri.

Al-Gil Garbo from the Australian Ballet wonders the dancers in that accompaniment of the epic masterpiece. Toward of the Vigorous Choreographic Institute in Leningrad. Garcia has danced the roles of Benedi Petit's Casanova, Aurora in Sleeping Beauty, Kitri in Nureyev's

CANDICE Adea

Sebastian, Tempo the manservant of Lord Minkus in Minkus. The production is a contemporary Ballet Philippines choreographer, Hesychia Asuncion, using the versions of Marius Petipa and William Mcgee.

Performances are scheduled for Feb. 17, 8 p.m.; Feb. 18, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Feb. 19, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Feb. 20, 14 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the CCP Main Theater (Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo).

Ticket prices are Feb. 17 and 18 gala performances are from P1,000-P5,000. Regular prices are from P200-P800 and morning shows from P400-P2,000.

Call CCP Box Office at 832-3704 and TicketWorld at 891-9999. For group sales, call Ballet Philippines at 551-1005 or 8328041; visit www.ballet-philippines.org.

The never-ending song of the indestructible Sylvia la Torre

From page C3

main theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, entitled "Lara." The show's concept was an attempt to reconceptualize traditional Philippine music into musical forms that the present generation could connect to, so as not to have these comfortable tunes that are now beat'fully disappearing.

Stroke of genius

The choice of La Torre's co-interpreter songs (but she herself championed was a stroke of genius to as well as a challenge. On the part of the young orchestra, the musical arrangements done by various musical arranger known to "tweak" the original score into contemporary tempo would require a little more immediate long hours of rehearsals. for La Torre, having to "tolerate" the original tempos of songs she could sing in her sleep would be like controlling a runaway genie and sewing it up together again in another form.

This challenge came early enough to La Torre when she walked into the piano rehearsal with her daughter, the brilliant child star Cha Cha, and granddaughter, 10-year-old Alyssa, whom La Torre had taught "Dan Ingh" her signature Kundiman and believe for vocal warm-up. La Torre, prodding Alyssa to sing with her, obliged the staff with an impromptu "Sa Kalsadahan" complete with those hand-cupping gaga "rolls," before settling into the serious business of "unlearning." A can-do-ugh of the rearranged "Bulaon" in a more upbeat tempo prompted La Torre to quip "I hate medyo 'yung kabayo eh hihi ng tempo" (The horse might trip with the speed of the tempo). A few adjustments and compromises later, and the rehearsal proceeded.

Sylvia La Torre, in the lucky ones who had the privilege of seeing her television shows—"The Big Show," and later, "Oras ng Lipayan"—will remember her pedal-y spoiling voice, her clear soprano and her signature hairdo.

"Oras ng Lipayan," which ran for eight years, became one of the pioneering shows of ABS-CBN. Her enduring tandem with Oscar Obligacion was not just an on-camera partnership, but a lifelong friendship.

A massive scholar of the University of Santo Tomas, La Torre, who rewarded her first song contest "Si Pedro Mo Ganun" in 1955, went on to record 400-more songs between 1950s and the '70s, giving her the much-deserved title of Queen of Kundiman.

She is the first classical singer in the Philippines to have successfully crossed over to pop culture.

'Kundiman' purist

When Irene M. Asuncion, chairman of the Young Musicians Development Organization, contacted La Torre for her guest appearance on "Lara, Ylu Kundiman queen was in first opperformance. A few months before, she had undergone an undiagnose, then recently, nerve surgery. Still recovering when she got the call, she said, "para magsabihan ko 'yung concept ni Irene."

She, like Asuncion, a passionate music aficionado and musicians as well, was also concerned that the songs she loved were threatened with obscurity.

She eagerly accepted the engagement.

She included in the repertoire of "Lara" was La Torre's favorite, "Bituing Marikit." Although she would have wanted to sing it, she was against the handsfree being rearranged. For her, this is one form that she feels ought not to be touched. She really feels that the kundiman form is lost in the present generation.

In Los Angeles, La Torre was unanimous to do shows, sometimes teaming up with granddaughters Alyssa and Anna Maria, who was cast as "Fame," "Tian nah Montana," and is currently enrolled with the Jones Brothers. She is proud to announce that she is a "stage-kids."

When not doing shows, she coaches Filipino youngsters how to sing traditional love songs, vocalizing them with "Manila-ida Mo Kaya" or " Saan Ito Mali Nawawasa." She happily observes that even if these children are born and bred in the United States, when it comes to singing these songs, they learn quickly, singing from the heart, even if Tagalog is no longer their first language.

Showmanship

On the evening of the CCP performances, she then to sing was the young pop singer Jaseh Cervantes. Confident of her notes and gifted with great pipes, she surrendered admirably to being initially nervous as the prospect of being billed together with a legend who came way before her time. Although Sarah was "familiar" with "Bituing Marikit," the Bicolano song "Sarong Banggi" was something new to her. Sung to a blues tempo, the Bicolano love song was, for Sarah, perfect.

Baritone Andrew Fernando was next, singing a heart-wrenching "Bandanera," rearranged a nice drawer from the original, reconceptualizing it, as Arsenio explained, to suit today's OPM family situation. The original arrangement in a stately "sarap balaisan" (handbasethy measure) was skewed down. The band's new tempo measures evoke a certain melancholia, that the ending lyric which is to original intent was a happy declaration's "asuan ang dalita," takes on a new perspective. Because of the underlying sad session of the new musical context, the original declaration of unqualified faithfulness translates to a resigned acceptance of the pain of fidelity. Such is the world in which this young generation lives where hurts is not necessarily where the heart is.

There it was La Torre's turn. Clad in a cream Aurora Aleniio and-Lydon with gold cartoon, candy-colored beads, Sylvia La Torre was clearly in her element, hopping time to the new beat of "Kalesa," her body keeping time to the typical "sarapsalan" tempo of the many chanteuses of her generation. With bated breath, the audience listened as La Torre's arrangement of "Sa Kalsadahan" arpeggios, perhaps a little more of breath, but nevertheless executed with sheer confidence—especially as the high Cs, hovering too giddy applause, an affirmation of appreciation for showmanship as pure as this.

And when finally the whole cast burst in and Aurora Beaver' lyrics to Ryan Cayabyab's "Bonakalakalap," the current Christmas fi-nale favorite, La Torre, keeping to the beat of the song less familiar to her, held her own, never really playacting or Maestro Bunny Ilan Perlas to keep time, still exuding a robust level of performance that can only learn from sheer joy and passion for her art and can't admit she has held dear for 78 years, and still counting.

SYLVIA la Torre with daughter Cha Cha and granddaughter Alyssa

SYLVIA la Torre delights fans with an impromptu rendition of "Sa Kalsadahan"

IRENE Herrera-Asuncion, chair of the Young Musicians Development Organization, joins the virtuosity

Metro Manila Concert Orchestra launches new season with pianist Cristine Coyiuto

THE METRO Manila Concert Orchestra (formerly Metro Manila Community Orchestra) will launch its 10th and 11th concert season on Jan. 14 at the Francisco Santiago Hall of Banco de Oro (BDO) Building on Makati Avenue, Makati City.

"Concert/Fest 10/11" will be led by noted music director Jonathan Diaze Toledo.

To be featured are noted pianists Cristine Coyiuto, Arisa Lalee Malik, Raul Branes, Albert Tio and Liel Magali; violinist Alfonso Cinko Stolipin; saxophonist Michael Young; and choirs New Horizons and Siloto Conservatory.

All concerts will be major music events, with the July 11 concert highlighting 11 new works of the country's gifted composers inspired by 11 works of recognized visual artists, as the MMCO celebrates its 11th anniversary.

MMCO "Concert/Fest 10/11" will be a year-long fund-raising project of the MMCO board of trustees. It will fund new orchestral works by Filipino composers, conductorial training and development of orchestra members, instruments and music scores procurement, and educational concert programs for public schools and other communities.

"Concert/Fest 10/11" will open on Jan. 14 with "poems of the piano" Cristine Coyiuto performing the orchestrally insensitive Saint-Saen Piano Concerto No. 4, which is considered one of the composer's most popular concertos.

Other highlights of the evening will be the musical performances of two top clients of the country, Del Nacio Concertmaster and Neo Nocino performing the Lazo-San Pedro masterpiece, "Sa Balaki pangaja," with baritone Lawrence Jacayna.

Completing the program will be the MMCO performances of "Carnival Overture" by Dvorak and the the Philippine premiere of "Non Bertrand Sinatra" by Rodriguez.

For ticket inquiries and reservations, call Nish or Evelyn at 426-1522 or 4368747, or Imelda at 8211866 or 0916-4452222.

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"MEDITATION Madre," by Agnes Arellano

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

Notable visual art events of 2010

By Lito B. Zulueta

THE ART scene in 2010 continued to recover from the financial crisis that swept the globe in 2008. Evincing resilience, it saw the opening of new galleries and the consolidation of established ones, such as Serrudo's U/of Gallery refurbishing itself as Looking for Juan Gallery, a reference to one of its more successful shows with the Ginivas art promotion group.

Easily the biggest art event of the year was the second MAKILAT fair in July at the SM Convention Center of the Mall of Asia. Bigger and better, the fair even drew the participation of Yenyen and Mindanao art galleries, showing that the visual arts have become nationally vibrant.

"PAGPAMAS Eden" No. 1, by Dudley Diaz

Other notable events

"Body and Soul," the joint show of Agnes Arellano and Dudley Diaz, at Galleria Duemila in June-July was a fitting combination of two of the country's most spiritually lived sculptors. The works drew from Arellano's immersion in ancient erotic literature and temples, such as those of Khajuraho in Northern India as well as Diaz's well-grounded though eclectic ap-

BOOKMARK D2

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'Niño Jesus' exhibit opens at Sta. Ana Church this week

100-YEAR-OLD wood-carved image of Nuestro Señor de los Desamparados

NIÑO Jesus de la Abundancia is from the collection of Fr. James Alamillo, OP

By Julie M. Aligan
Core Status

THE PARISH of Our Lady of the Abandoned in Sta. Ana, Manila, opens its Carmelite door to Pagan for the "Niño Jesus" exhibit on Jan. 6-16.

The week-long exhibit will display various images of the Infant Child owned by Tom Jones, Antonio de Jesus, Noel Alejandro, Marcial Bernabe, Jr., Nenal Ramirez, Teodoro Encarnacion, Bernardo Marquez, Ernest Perez, Rene Dizon, Jun Mendoza and Fr. James Alamillo, OP.

Fr. Andy Litiqui, OPSS, Sto. Ana Church parish priest and project chair, says "the Santo Niño is very much revered in the country by many Filipinos of deep faith."

"The Filipinos' special devotion is evident not only in the number of images of various representations of the child Jesus but also in their collaborative efforts (to) set, design, organize and hold, to name a few," the Franciscan priest added.

The Christ child appears all year in a great number of versions wearing different costumes. Many times, the Child Jesus is venerably presented as sovereign and in priestly garb, exuding the virtues of humility, innocence and faith.

The devotion to the Infant is part of **the Filipino culture and history as a people** and Liturgy. The parish priest further stressed that **the exhibit is very timely as tumultuous difficulties are being experienced by many Filipino family** day to day, and this week should serve as a reminder for all, of the Infant Child's unconditional love for all.

As a fitting tribute to the Filipinos' piety, **the Pope has set aside a special day** on Jan. sixty for the celebration of the feast of the Holy Child of **the Philippines**.

Philip Escudero, president of Cofradia de Nuestro Señora de los Desamparados and exhibit chair, said devotion to the Santo Niño is also a way of understanding the life of Jesus during His childhood years, and devotees depict this Kingly Child in various images displayed in occasions in public transportation, private cars, stores, and in practically every Filipino home.

18TH-CENTURY Carmelite of Nuestro de los Desamparados, European Niño Jesus with an orb-and-cross (above from the Nativity scene, courtesy of Nina Alejandro

SLEEPING Child Christ from Thailand, from the collection of Fr. Nicolas

MINIATURE Santo Niño in ivory, courtesy of Fr. Nicolas; Nina Barrameda

NIÑO Jesus de los Reyes, from Mexico

PHILIP Escudero (r.) with Fr. Andy Litiqui, OPSS, and Bal Morales

Visual Arts

BenCab prints in Singapore

"Glimpses" by BenCab opens Jan. 14 in Singapore Tobin Print Institute of Rotterdam Boon Singapore's "Tarawa Island" dance performance follows.

Group show at Big & Small

Third "Cubed: Rabbit Revolution" by University Mati works by "Kitchen and Child," on view in Manila's Big & Small Art Gallery (4th Silid Magsaysay, Bldg. A, Mandaluyong). Tel. 5605449 until Jan. 8. Participating artists are Alejandro Jacuzzi, Jacques Cadiz, Adrian Muller, Jason Martinez, Joel Quinones, Kim Jacinto Santiago and Cori Tonas. Joel Mendez curates.

"TRUTH and Dare" by Edwin Martinez

Lecture on museology at Lopez

The lecture "Museology: The Art of Museography Art" is slated Jan. 5 in Ayala Museum. Makati Ave. and De la Rosa St., Greenbelt Park, Makati City, tel. 757-7117-21, e-mail museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org). Mr. Fernando Leprid Rodriguez is speaker. It is organized by Zeno Commercial Interprises of Ateneo Art Gallery, Ayala Museum, Bistay Tuason, Lopez Memorial Museum and Museo Pambata. The lecture aims to create art more available, accessible, exciting and relevant. Admission is P150 for students and P200 for adults. Inclusive of admission cost to the galleries. Presentation is based in New Jersey and has earned her masters degree for Fine Arts, Major in Museology at Syracuse University, New York, and masters degree for Art History at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

"KAALAM ng Dito," by Rodel Tapaya

Tapaya at UP Vargas

Jorge B. Vargas Museum (Osmeña Avenue, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City) is featuring Rodel Tapaya's artwork in "Kalutan ng Dito." The exhibit will run until March 6. Call 928-1301 or visit www.vargasmuseum.org.

Canvassing at Finale

An open call (Dec. 31 at the Tall Gallery of Finale Art Fair (Mandaluyong 11, La Fuerza Compound, Gate 1, 2241 Pasong Tamo, Makati; www.finale.ph.com) is Valeria Canvassing's "La Ville Entertain You." Taking inspiration from Friedrich Schiller's remark that all art is dedicated to play, he selected participants of paintings and multidisciplinary works performed by a life-scene of places now and for, shop with transmedious beauty, informed with personal joys and longings.

Malasimbo fest in Mindoro

The First Malasimbo Music & Arts Festival will be staged Feb. 18 to 20 in Puerto Galera, Mindoro. It will be held at Sabang Beach, Puerto Galera. It is a collaboration of the municipalities of the island of Mindoro, with a view of Puerto Galera Bay, a member of the world-wide Club of the Most Beautiful Bays in the World. The festival aims to blend traditional and contemporary arts and cultures together with music performances while working toward the protection and sustainability of the natural environment. Visit www.malasimbo.festival.com.

Ray Alvarez is NCCA ambassador

Ray Alvarez and Dingdong Dantes are selected NCCA ambassadors. A painting and performing awareness is not only tools and arts online with its many functions, exciting and educational activities. Alvarez is named ambassador of the 2011 Philippine International Arts Festival. He started at Metropolitan Theater as an assistant stage manager and rose to the ranks of director for public relations under the administrations of the executive director the honorable Conching Sevilla. Dantes is NCCA's youth ambassador. He will be representing the youth sector for the celebration of Philippine International Arts Festival 2011, one of the flagship projects of the NCCA.

Architect-Artist' at MET

"Architect-Artists" is on view in the Douglas Dreishpoon Philippine Gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila (Roxas Boulevard, Manila, tel. 8350013, 5215189, e-mail info@metropolitan.ph) until April 12. It looks into the artistic and divergent worlds of the arts and of architecture in the Philippine context and, in general, through eight architect-artists represented in the MET art collection. Featured artists are Miguel Zaragoza, Andres Luna de San Pedro, Jose Ariston, Nolasco Antal Victorino Edades, Agustin Cruz, Arturo Dimalanta, Cirilo Bautista and Claudio Tayag.

Notable visual art events of 2010

Front page D1

precision of western religious art. The result was a meeting of East and West through the transcendental concern of art.

Another supreme sculptor, Julia Urada, showed she's in her element while also training the spotlight on her daughter-artists in the show, "Home Works," at the Alliance Francaise. Bound by blood and genes, the show perfectly established how the Urada-Zadona brood has become the country's most consistent family of artists. Julie's daughters—filmmaker Iori Dakota Sicat, multimedia artist and musician Ana Dalena and film maker-visual artist Riri Dakota—delivered solidly underground works beside their mom's, their sense of independence a credit to Julie's maternal and nourishing spirit. The show somehow puts a new layer of meaning to what artist Fely Gallo "Beach" Arevalo has said about Julie: "She writes different works like a mother to her children."

Arellano and Diaz were later featured again in November by Alliance Francaise in another erotic exhibit, but Dan Diaz with painter Fernando Modesto, "Conspiradores de Placer" (Pleasure Conspirators), the duo challenged themselves into a conspiracy of pleasure, with Modesto typically giving full play to his effervescent.

Ayala Museum opened a year-end supportive of the artistic career of the late great Onib Olmedo in November by Help Line Social Services' Gala (running until Jan. 30) shows the consistency and coherence in the master expressionist's paintings, the distorted portraits achieving depth and brilliance across several viewing. The show is surely the year's most compelling.

A welcome note was the apparent relaxation in the gallery rent of painter Alfredo Lovigueen. The relatively new Gallery José of Manhina City exhibited the veteran artist's recent works in "Hiding Petals," which Lovigueen dedicated to the victims of Typhoon "Ondoy" and other natural disasters. Although Lovigueen's usually nude scenes for his observer works, the show's release represents national paintings indicated the artist's mastery of grave works.

Significant was the 30th solo exhibit of James Deighobo at the Ayala Art Gallery, a colorful passage to his 40th birthday-born this year. Deighobo, master painter Angelito Antonio returned in the exhibit event with a rare collection of 15 artworks painted in a purely black and white tonality in "Legacy Series: Black and White Show" at Galerie Stephanie.

Meanwhile, "VIVA! The Power of Struggle," a very informative book by Alfredo Roces and Serafin Gillis on Filipino-Canadian Solomon Vernon Mendoza, consolidated the achievement of the 79-year-old artist.

Art lovers were treated to rare and unique works of Ilonggo in Galeria Stephanie's "Iloilo Kitchen Show" in September. The diverse offerings—landscapes and abstracts, lyric meditations and craggy evocations—showed that Ilonggo artists no more his art and moved to many-sided brilliance.

Dizon Gallery brought together painters Reinaldo Olazo and sculptor Ramon Orlina in "Visionary of Light," a show that consolidated the two artists' respective reputations as masters of "the line."

DEBALEDINE Javier's "Bed is the color of life and so is black"

Geraldine Javier, Joel Lagapa, Freddie Lee and Isabel Aquilizan, and Lesle de Chavez were among the Southeast Asian artists featured in the Korean show "Beauty of Archipelago" (still running until Jan. 30 at Arario Gallery in Seoul), which introduces their expression as today's more stirring voices in Philippine art.

Toward the end of the year, Manila Contemporary hosted the exhibition, "Painting with a Hammer to Nail the Crotch of Civilization: A Group Show of Wall Works and Tattoo Imagery," organized by Manuel Domingo. The show featured international artists Greek Kristi Gronlund, Chris Cornerman (Denmark), Carsten Dining Bruun (Philippines), Enric Gonzalez (Spain), David Griggs Diocletio (Philippines), Doctor Lubao (Mexico), Mhar-Gelston Kerunay's, Pablo Baptist (Argentina), and Gerardo Tan (Philippines), all friends of the '120 based Quezon. Noting that the visual arts have become pluralistic, Domingo, who curated the show, said that art has become "psychological and sociological and even economics practice, such as mural and tattoo painting. At once interactive and exhibitionistic, the show gave Manila viewers a map of where the visual arts may be headed.

Based on the exhibit, the map is fuzzy and almost disorientation, but its directions are at least interesting.

ART IN ONE by [illegible]

ART IN ONE by Jonas Olegario

Rosalinda Orosa is 'Turning Back the Pages' in new book

THE BOOK "Turning Back the Pages," by internationally awarded cultural historian Rosalinda L. Orosa will be launched Jan. 8, 2 p.m., at the Instituto Cervantes' Salon de Actos.

The selected miscellany contains rare glimpses of Rizal, mini portraits of José H. Laurel, Eugenio Lopez Sr., Santos, Sr. Francisco Arellano Jr., and the author as a fast-tested ballerina.

There are essays on widely diverse subjects, short stories, poems, light verses, and the author's responses to her French, Swimsuit, Spanish awards and the Premio Label. Also included is her first prize-winning essay in the Quijano de Manila awards.

A unique legacy of the book is a revolutionary song which was passed on to the author by her mother who, as a little girl, heard Filipino soldiers singing the song.

The chapter "Homes to Marvelous Ghosts" aims to elicit a chuckle from the reader. Letters from Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Dr. Serafin Quiason, Isabel C. Wilson, Erlinda Villanueva and Helene, friends, MDs and guests are at the author's conferment of awards.

The book, edited by Angelo R. Cruz, and published by the Manila Times Publishing Corporation, will be available at P300 per copy in leading bookstores.

Book on exorcism launched Jan. 8

ST PAUL Publishing, the apostolic arm of the Society of St. Paul which celebrates this year its 75 years of missionary presence in the Philippines, will launch the latest book by the best-selling author Fr. Jose Francisco Syquia: "Exorcist, a Spiritual Journey," on Jan. 8 at the San Carlos Seminary auditorium at 6 p.m.

Armed with a Licentiate in Spiritual Theology from the Angelicum University in Rome and a Master's degree in Psychology from the UST Graduate School, Fr. Jozo is the head of the Commission on Extraordinary Ministries for the Archdiocese of Manila. He is also the director of the Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism and a member of the International Association of Exorcists based in Rome.

Realizing the urgent need for more devoted and trained Catholic priests, religious and laity who would minister to the thousands and thousands of people who are sick and under the bondage of demonic powers, Fr. Syquia aims to share and impart lessons he gained through his studies and experience throughout the many years that he was involved in the ministry of deliverance and exorcism.

He hopes to gainly those in the ministries of healing, deliverance and exorcism to develop properly the charisms that God has graciously bestowed on them to build up his Church.

This book, the first of three volumes, focuses on the basic spiritual disposition necessary in the healing, deliverance, and especially the exorcism ministry.

Night of a million . . .

From page D4

scored by Jamby Dee and chief stage manager Ed Gutiérrez. Writer-star Pilar Quezon.

The crisp, balanced sound was designed and engineered by Rudy Carpio, while Mikaela de Jesus designed the spectacular lighting. Writer David devised the video design and Lemuel Inocencio coordinated the technical aspects of the production. Product designer Al Carcuan designed the stage and decorated the venue.

Guests were subsequently treated to a post-concert reception consisting of an exquisite dinner buffet, over which, the atmosphere from the concert continued to flow, and the stars continued to dine and the last guest had left.

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UST CHRISTMAS CONCERT GALA 2010

Night of a million stars

CONCERT at the UST Santisimo Rosario Chapel, part of the Art Deco-designed UST Father's Building Central Complex complex, declared a National Treasure by the National Museum

MAIN CIRCLE Leked and Fr. Isidro Abaño, OP, lead the UST Christmas Concert Organizing Committee.

By Ige Ramos
Cnn Bator

ON THE evening of Dec. 3, Manila was plunged into darkness because many of its stars were in attendance at the UST Chapel. It was been there on that night that the brightest light shone and the sweetest music resounded, soothing away the dust and easing the pain of our daily existence.

The stars that I refer to were the performers at the UST Christmas Concert Gala, who, along with a privileged audience, braved the madness of Manila's holiday traffic to attend.

Initiated eight years ago as a small program, can only to showcase Thomasian talent but also to express appreciation for the love, victory friends and benefactors, the UST Christmas Concert has since evolved into something truly spectacular an annual black-tie event eagerly anticipated by Manila's glitterati.

Inaugurated in 1941 at the Santisimo Rosario de Desario, the choir of UST chapel as the concert venue was most appropriate, since churches are often used as an alternative venue for classical and religious concerts, especially in Europe. It was also an opportunity to showcase the church's lovingly preserved Art Deco-inspired architecture, by Fernando Ocampo.

SOPRANO Rachelle Carvallon

HERRENDELDO Rivera conducts the UST Symphony Orchestra

UST Rector Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, OP welcomes Manila Who's Who to the concert.

One of the main objectives of the gala concert was to raise funds for the ongoing restoration and heritage conservation efforts of the important works of art housed both in the UST Museum and the University itself. The funds are also intended to provide scholarships for deserving students from the Conservatory of Music.

Heritage gang

As co-chairs of the Christmas Concert Gala, UST Museum director Fr. Isidro Abaño, OP, has collaborated with art patrons and socialite Shamrock Cobcobado since 2008. The somewhat unlikely union made possible by UST alumnus Jonathan Mutt and University friends Andrew Gan and Greg Arenson, Cobcobado's major inspiration during her travels overseas, coupled with Father Abaño's study of art conservation in Rome, led them to follow the example of other countries by sharing a vision to conserve works of art in the Philippines.

To set the tone for the musical treats-to-come, the UST Boys Ensemble played the Christmas fanfare, while student volunteer ushers, dressed in embroidered barong and saya gowns, welcomed the guests as they trickled into the Chapel. By the time the UST Symphony Orchestra, with its conductor Herrendeldo Rivera, entered the stage the venue was filled to capacity.

The Orchestra, combined with the Coro Iconico gave a magnificent performance of familiar and lesser known Christmas melodies and hymns.

Included was the English folk song Greensleeves "What Child Is This?" arranged for two harps by Fr. Marcelino, OSB, and, with Christmas Companion, was beautifully interpreted by the Philippines's first lady of the harp, Lourdes Cerqueña.

The "Oh Night Divine Medley" was a touching yet powerful performances by soprano, Simon Espina, Theo Perez and Naomi Isaac, and tenors, Eugene delos Santos, Ramon Ferrer and Randy Ubongo.

Pianist Raul Sunico's interpretation of "The Nutcracker Suite" transported us from the UST Chapel to the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. It was full, booming and magical.

Audience favorite

A particular favorite with the audience was a unique interpretation of "Santa Joyful We Adore Thee" from the chorus of Beethoven's 9th Symphony beginning with the Liturgikon Vocal Ensemble and soloist Leonel de la Cruz singing the chorus in a classical manner it then tranformed into a pop ballad, and ingenious a supremely gospel spiritual followed by an interpretation of it until finally, and most surprisingly a rap version, performed by tenor Leonel dela Cruz.

Soprano Mylah Ann Cenibo Subio and tenor Jose Maria Ibanez sang Daniel Rutter's "The Prayer" and the Jerry Vivenzio "Shalom" by Ryan Cayabyab, followed by the UST Singers with their conductor Fidel Calalang, Jr. singing "Kumpara ng Simbahan" and "Mistulin." All of which were rendered with great gusto, talent and spiritual warmth.

Another highlight of the evening was soprano Rachelle Gerodias's performance of "Se, Jene Gronly" from Handel's "Messiah." Singing later the popular, "Because of Who You Are," Gerodias was able to display her musical versatility and vocal range.

All choral groups came together to perform the commissioned piece, "Shalom UST" by Antonio J. Africa.

To the delight of the audience, the evening ended with a communal rendition of "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World."

The seamless presentation of the show can be attributed to the direction of Alexander C. Cortez.

TURN TO

WIND section of the UST Orchestra

STRING section of the UST Orchestra

200 CHOIR of the World, UST Singers

POWER! Raul Sunico, dean of the UST Conservatory of Music

TENOR Leonel de la Cruz

HEALTHY BREADS: PART OF A BALANCED DIET

to help prevent diabetes

Diabetes affects some three million people in the Philippines, and everyday, another 300 Filipinos are diagnosed with the disease. Type 2 diabetes is most prevalent and is linked to obesity and physical inactivity. If untreated, diabetes can lead to stroke, blindness, kidney failure, leg and foot amputations, pregnancy complications, or worse.

The good news is that, as with many obesity-related diseases, type 2 diabetes is largely avoidable. Research shows that lifestyle changes, improved diet, activity, and weight management can limit the risk of diabetes. According to the Obesity Society, "Managing your weight is the best thing you can do to prevent the development of diabetes."

First, consult a doctor immediately if you fear you are overweight. Then, choose balance – a lifestyle that includes a balanced diet and regular exercise. Practicing discipline in our daily routine is no easy task, but the road to health and fitness begins with a single step towards wise dietary choices.

Health and fitness do not require you to starve yourself, nor do they sentence you to a life of tasteless food. On the contrary, a healthy diet allows you to please your palate while meeting your body's nutritional needs. Healthy wheat foods are high in complex carbohydrates, low in sugar and calories, and are a source of fiber, protein, and a range of vitamins and minerals. Healthy wheat products are part of a healthy lifestyle and help fight obesity. Whole wheat breads, cereals, pastas, crackers, tortillas, and other healthy wheat products offer a variety of options to help you achieve the balance you desire.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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SHOW TIME

Foreign concerts coming soon

GOOD of the foreign acts coming to Manila in the next few months are Boyz II Men in Harmony, Jan. 8, SMX Convention Center; Trini Lopez, Feb. 13, Araneta Coliseum; Try by Sarah, Feb. 26, Araneta Coliseum, and Don McLean, March 2, Araneta Coliseum.

OVERHEARD

ANG MGA, on "Showbiz News Ngayon," Dec. 28, on this final hurrah of her short- lived career: Bayan Patrol" Ganah Pasumo? Ganah Pasumo: "Hindi naman ngayon magkakausap ang isang tao [Carmina] kung walang pinanggagalingan."

JAKE CUENCA, also on "SNN," about spending time with girlfriend Melissa Borkie: "Buon may free time, ayaw pa niyang I want to spend it with him [Buntot]."

RISE ARJONA, Tweeting about going with James Yap when their 3-year-old son Baby James received the Most Inactive Child Wo- nderful award at the 3rd Lingkod TV Awards organized by the National Council for Children's TV): "Happy mom and mga dad talaga kami."

ANGEL AQUINO, on "TV Patrol," Dec. 28: "Ang saya-saya ko po talaga dahil sa isa po lang despedida today ko, sabado is my cutest, ang dami nang nangyayari. What more for my personal life?"

JENNY MISCIM, again on "SNN," about being picked against fellow Kapamilyan stars Bea Alonzo, Erich Gonzales, and Kim Chiu: "Marunong pa rin naman ako, at the same time challenge sa akin. At siyempre isang tag na rin po ito [ng] Alam ko na [inaasahan] sa akin ng kumbong tatlo]."

Allen Pallesgrin, contributor

Thoroughly indie Uge

Comedy superstar straddles innovation and commerce

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IN KEEPING with the night's independent spirit, comedy star Eugene Domingo, one of the presenters in the recent 1st Pusong Indie Telfono, expressed plans of producing a film with friend, and another crowd-drawer, Ai Ai delas Alas.

Domingo, popularly known by her nickname Uge, premiered awards to her directors Brillante Mo. Mendoza ("Foster Child") and Dom Marbiwa ("1:00") at the Inquirer event held Dec. 16.

She is remembered as Indie Queen so last one night, because her independently produced comedy "Kimmy Dora" (also penned by Marbiwa) won a lot.

Turning to producing is the next logical step for Uge and DF (or Best Friend), her pet name for Ai Ai. "DF wants us to become the country's Brad Pitt and George Clooney. In spite of the low budget, it'll be a film maybe. Kokolokan lang."

Uge promised to save up for the dream project. "DF will do scenes ... I'll do movies left and right. Magkakaroon ako dong kotheques. Then, DF told me to study filmmaking. I'll direct the movie also, so we can cut costs. Isang bato na lang."

Uge and Ai Ai have done several hits together since the fine "Tanging Ina" in 2002. For this year's Metro Manila Film Festival, they are rewarded for the sub rosa in "Ang Tanging Ina Mo Rin, Last Na "In." (Plus, Uge stars Best Supporting Actress; Ai Ai, Best Actress.)

When they met on the set of "Tanging Ina 3" seven years ago, Uge recalled, they instantly hit it off. "We didn't know it just because we were supposed to be best friends in the movie," said Uge. "One day she asked me if her chest double looked like hers. I couldn't answer."

Breaking the ice

The conversation was an extreme version of ALAL Think crescent moon times three. That broke the ice.

"We took good together structure," Uge said of their partnership. "Bahala siya, pabibig ako. When I'm hyper, she's relaxed. And vice versa."

Although the "Tanging Ina" franchise is thoroughly commercial, Uge makes time for daring and innovative projects, like her urban MMFF entry this year. The comic, DV's first full-length 3D animated feature "EPIC: Metanoia."

Doing voice work is a homecoming of sorts for the theater-trained Uge, who once worked as dubber for foreign cartoons, Latin telenovelas and Korean movies.

"I was a voice talent for kids-CBN cartoons, among which some GMA 7 shows," she said. "I did 'Heidi' and 'Sleeping Beauty.'"

THOMSON/STEED

EUGENE Domingo and Tessie Tomas

Isn't she lovely?

ANITA Linda rode a float—for the first time (for the Metro Manila Film Festival), after years on thunder in the movie to death.

CHEER FACTOR

"I enjoyed myself," she told Inquirer. "There were so many people!"

It marked a milestone in her illustrious career. "I used to watch it only on television. This time I was part of the parade."

The veteran actress top-billed "Presa," directed by Adolfo Alix Jr., which was declared Best Independent Film at the MMFF. She was Alix's special guest at the 1st Inquirer Indie Telfono held recently, where the filmmaker was one of 25 honorees.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

Maybe kids will bring them closer?

Epi: Dad deserves awards

EPI Quinto

SOLIDITY "Father Argument" was the subject of much controversy. But the Quinto family has put everything behind them now, as they celebrate their patriarch's double victory as the recently-nominated Metro Manila Film Festival.

In a "Showbiz News Ngayon" interview on Dec. 28, actor Epi Quinto expressed his whole family's delight:

"[My dad] has apologized to the people [who were] offended. I think now is the time for us to forgive and forget. He was because he deserved it. He did just as to the rules. He was very effective in his drama scenes in Ingenue. Now he's also very happy that many of my siblings have come home from the United States and Australia."

Epi said Pidol likes working, although his kids would rather see him retire now. Allan Pellicerpio, contributor

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'Bless us, Father, for we have erred'

IF YOU'RE a producer and your film is about to start its run in the Metro Manila Film Festival, the last thing you need is controversy. Especially if your movie is a comedy, all you want is for viewers to have a good, hearty laugh from start to finish—absolutely no threats of boycott, please!

But that's exactly what has happened to Jerry Comic Dolphy's current movie "Father Jejemon," all because a few scenes in his movie, where he plays a priest for the last time in his career, attempt to get laughs from outre "Conversation" scenes that a number of viewers find ill-advised at best, and a thoughtless desecration of the Eucharist, at worst.

In particular, this objection (shot of a communion host "accidentally" being dropped and falling into a female communicant's cleavage. That's funny, right? Eh, not.

What the film patron who thought up these sight gags forgot is the fact that Roman Catholics (who comprise the majority of Filipinos) believe that the consecrated host has in fact become the transubstantiated body of Jesus Christ. So, for it to be treated in such a disrespectful manner is a grievous affront, and should not be tolerated.

To be fair, after some people reacted to protest, the MTRCB and the movie's producers immediately took steps to mitigate the situation by removing the offensive shots from the film's trailer, as well as from the full-length feature that viewers are now watching during the festival.

But some people wonder how the offending scenes ended up in the movie's trailer in the first place. Dolphy himself is supposed to be "Kamikiko Comrade"—so, as he does the scene, didn't he realize its unacceptable consequences?

Just for laughs!

What about the members of the MTRCB review committee that passed judgment on the trailer and the full film? Haven't there any knowledgeable and sensitive Christians in the group who were bothered by those shots in which the consecrated host was disrespected, just to get a laugh?

What about the viewers who saw the trailer on TV and found nothing wrong with those offensive shots?

And, what about the TV newscasters that ran those shots, sometimes repetitively? Was it also to get a laugh? Or, was it a ruse to entrap viewers into watching the film by way of negative publicity?

From page E1

Thoroughly

to? No, I wasn't [illegible] Dimaculangan.

Mic's thrilled about "MFC" because her mom-in-law-to-be was raised by nga Mohlach. "Gusto mam long sa future partner ko si Aga!"

She got mesmerized when she saw "MFC" is co-entirety. "When we dubbed it, it was still very rough," Tiger assumed. "I never thought it would be this beautiful. I'm proud to say that it's gawang Pinoy, pinoy Pinoy."

Motivation

It's important for her to be part of films that straddle the mainstream and indie, commerce and innovation.

She explained: "My constant motivation is hunger." Not for food, but for personal and professional fulfillment. "I don't want to be limited. I want to reach out to different kinds of audiences. Black and puti, young and old, local and foreign. I want to keep on growing always."

E-mail [illegible]

Voltaire C. Tayag

Well, so sorry, the offensive shots are no longer in the movie showing in the MMFF.

And, what about the threatened boycott? Personally, we wouldn't go that far, especially because artistic lives probably been made.

It's more instructive to take this unfortunate instance to remind everyone that religious decorum be taken more seriously and especially, not just by artists but also by the general population. And, while we're at it, note further that some local movies also err on point of merit, artistic originality and other issues that similarly disrespect the characters or institutions being spoofed, disparaged or otherwise insulted.

TV and film movies are too potentially powerful to be used and perused in so crass a fashion. More thought, sensitivity, feeling for and good judgment are definitely in order...for all of us!

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'Angels of the Sea' extended till Jan. 16

TERRIFIC DOLPHIN and sea lion shows "Angels of the Sea" at the Ayuzen Center in Cubao has been extended until Jan. 16, with reduced admission ticket prices (P350 for VIP seats, P250 for upper tiers). Dolphins Patti and Trinity and sea lions Jello and Jolli perform startling skills guaranteed to make spectators feather appreciate their intelligence.

Promoter Jojo "Gingoy" Avellino, spokesperson for Isdell Amusements and the "Save the Ocean: Save Marine Life" advocacy, says, "We really want people to experience these wonderful sea creatures up close, and witness how much we value and care for them." Call 9123333.

Stars pledge help

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—Some 57 celebrities have pledged support for the children of Negros in need of shelter, education and care.

Actors, doctors, chefs, designers and photographers joined 2010 Pinoylebrads—promising to share their time, talent and these to grassroot awareness of rare foundations, according to Joy Abello, one of the organizers.

The event, held at Ramon Siscio in Bisitan on Dec. 8 and 9, sought to raise funds for the roads being done by the Kalipay Negrense sud Bgrdanga foundation for Negrense children, Abello said.

Kalipay Negrense helps the homeless, orphaned, physically and mentally abused, malnourished, out-of-school and special children, its president Anna Isabelle said.

Tapahanan helps provide educational, health care and microcredit assistance to numerous in Silay City and neighboring areas, said its executive director, Rhenie Abello-Golez.

During the Pinoylebrads event, the celebs offered their services for free to star in 20 advertisements that Abello shot, and which will be aired on cable channels throughout 2011.

Abello said many of the celebrities who came to his Emman Bradio the three stages stayed to talk to the people touring the foundations.

Many of the celebs had roots in Negros. Those included Jaid Tarin, Ronnie Lazaro, Jhodie Bacaing, and JM Rodriguez. The others who also made pledges were John Lapus, siblings Mark and Cherie Gil, Pinky Amador, members of 'The Groupie's' and designer Rajo Laurel.

DRAWING as protégé, by Rajo Laurel.

JOSE junior Reyes and Joel Torre

The iconic Rizal in Eumelia! / F4

8-year-olds learn about the bees / F4

LEARNING

Editor Chelo Banal-Fermoso

Email: learning@inquirer.com.ph

EDUCATION Secretary Armin Luistro gets to see firsthand what and how a fourth-grader learns.

EDUCATION MATTERS

Top 10 in 2010

WITH THE NEW Philippine President came a new education secretary, who quickly made front page news along with a controversial plan to add two years to basic education, installable tax exhaustion in the curriculum, cut the education budget, and stop wholesale diploma reward teachers. Chelo Banal-Fermoso and Linda Bohido review the year's top education news, with the help of the Inquirer Research team.

Basic plus two

ON WORLD Teachers' Day in October, DepEd announced its plan to adopt the 6+4+2 (Kindergarten plus 12) program for basic education in the Philippines.

The breakdown of the 12 years after kindergarten is as follows: Six years of elementary school (Grades 1 to 6), four years junior high (Grades 7 to 10) and two years senior high school (Grades 11 to 12).

The program will include vocational courses in high school to equip students with employable skills should they be unable to enter university.

In effect, it is a program that aligns the present 10-year system with the universal 12-year basic education cycle.

DepEd said the program is hoped to give graduates the necessary ex pair with international standards, as well as graduate employable 18-year-olds.

DepEd officials are going to do it nice and slow, expressly, and will conduct consultations with all stakeholders. They plan to transition the system smoothly into the new administration in 2016 where the first batch of senior high school students is expected to be in the system.

Critics of the program said the government should address school backlogs before embarking on such an ambitious plan.

But Education Secretary Armin Luistro said the DepEd would overhaul the curriculum and solve the shortages in teachers, classrooms and textbooks at the same time that it would be putting into effect the K+12 program.

Those in favor of the 12-year system point to the public school students' dismal achievement test scores because the curriculum has been too crammed.

Teachers as targets

PEOPLE THEY might have been regarded and respected as second moms in the past, teachers have increasingly become victims of vicious, brutal assaults.

In 2010, Josephine Fausto, 44, a Grade 3 teacher at Tenejero Elementary School in Orion, was slighting from a tricycle when two men on a motorcycle shot and killed her on July 13. The attack happened at the school's gate, right after the flag-raising ceremony.

Rogelio Dino, 46, head teacher at Bantilan Elementary School in Agno, Pangasinan, was gunned down Oct. 28 on his way to school.

Teodora Asuncion, 32, a teacher at Manuel L. Quezon High School in Caloocan City, was stabbed to death by a second-year high school student allegedly for reprimanding the student for failing to cut his long hair and threatening to drop him from the roll.

Nolan Ubol, a teacher case with violent personalities and vandalism against the student. If found guilty, the teenager could be sentenced to up to 20 years in jail or life imprisonment since he turns 18 years old.

Dr. Reynaldo Ramonan, principal of Bagong Silang High School, was driving on Nov. 24 to his home in Meycauayan, Bulacan, when still unidentified gunmen shot him at least six times. He was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

Teacher Lorna Palabay died from wounds she received while shielding her pupils from an attack by Nida Blanca who went on a murderous frenzy inside Talisayan Elementary

TSIP/01

Talisay Elementary School in Zamboanga city where a crazed ex-convict fatally stabbed a teacher, a student and an elderly man.

Education budget

THE EDUCATION department gets the highest share of the national budget for 2011. Its P207 billion budget represents an increase of almost a fifth over the current year's P175 billion outlay, and is the largest budget increase in several years.

But government subsidies to state universities and colleges were reduced in the new budget, resulting in protest actions in November that, in some instances, turned unruly and even violent.

Students of Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) walked out of their classes to protest the P23-million reduction in the school's budget.

Philippine Normal University students threatened to follow suit to protest a P92-million cut in budget.

Student councils of the University of the Philippines system challenged the new President to honor his promise for change and reverse the trend of declining budgets for state institutions.

In a manifesto, the 30 student councils of the UP system branded the P1.39 billion cut in the budget for state universities and colleges.

Sex education

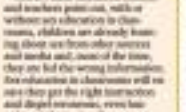
THE REPRODUCTIVE health (RH) bill, a contentious issue in the last Congress, remains the great divide between politicians and the local Catholic Church hierarchy. It was reported that the Church has shown direct or encouragement to Pro-Life Philippines if he would support the bill.

Although there are several versions of the bill, basically what they seek to do is what Rep. Edcel Lagman, principal proponent in the House of Representatives of the measure, outlines in his draft: "Lagman's bill will seek to promote both natural and artificial birth control methods through government programs, and advocate the education of students on reproductive health at the appropriate age, among other aims.

Opponents of the bill primarily oppose any proposal on reproductive health as promotion of abortion. And they see sex education as encouraging promiscuity among the young.

On the other hand, proponents say it is precisely to prevent irresponsible and risky behavior among young people that sex education has to be taught. Students have to learn to make the right decisions and choices and realize the consequences of unhealthy and risky behavior and habits.

Despite the reluctant opposition of the Catholic Church and even as the debate raged, sex education was piloted on June 15 in 90 public elementary schools and 78 public high schools.



Meanwhile, as education officials and teachers point out, with or without sex education in classrooms, children are already learning about sex from other sources and media and, most of the time, they are fed the wrong information. Sex education in classrooms will ensure they get the right information and dispel erroneous, even hazardous, information they get on the side.

Brother secretary for DepEd

IN JUNE 2010, newly elected President Benigno Aquino named Br. Armin Luistro, FSC, secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd). A former principal of De La Salle University system, he helped rally support for Aquino's presidential bid.

Luistro has years of active experience in education as a La Salle brother and, just prior to his appointment to DepEd, as chancellor and president of the De La Salle University system.

"This is a new way to govern, where, particularly the use of school youth and those in public schools," he said at his new responsibility.

Before long, he was visiting public schools in Metro Manila and the provinces, dressing up unannounced in some instances to witness firsthand what was going on at the learning areas.

He would like, he said, "to address backlogs in education resources within two years."

But first, he had to learn to deal with the media. A reckless remark—on the way media prevented, instead of encouraging, meaningful discussion of issues—sent him off into a tantrum on how to fix the media [sic].

Luistro will need more than buckets of his bromche media, having inherited a basic education system that has been much maligned for its inadequacies, as was riddled textbooks, classroom shortage, teacher incompetence, not to mention random, and lack of transparency.

2 directors for UP PGH

A DIRECTOR-City Regional Trial Court (RTC) has nominated Dr. Jose Gonzalez as director of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), the teaching hospital of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine.

The decision came almost a year after a controversial decision of the UP Board of Regents that appointed Gonzalez from the post just a few weeks after the same board appointed him to the job.

Judge Leonio Gomez ordered the UP Board of Regents (BOR), the UP system's highest governing body, to recognize the original appointment of Gonzalez.

Gonzalez would be considered PGH director, the court said, until the case he filed against UP for replacing him was resolved.

Gonzalez was selected on Dec. 18, 2009, by the BOR to replace PGH director Dr. Carmelo Abiller and was supposed to take his oath in January 2010, but outgoing UP president Emerlinda Roman postponed his oath taking following a protest by a BOR member, questioning the eligibility of Gonzalez to occupy the post.

On Feb. 25, 2010, the BOR held another meeting, electing Dr. Enrique Domingo, UP-PGH deputy director for administration, as PGH director. Gonzalez subsequently filed a case in court.

Domingo said he would respect the court's decision.

The swelling of the BOR resulted in a protest action by faculty members of the UP College of Medicine. The council of the UP medical school adopted a resolution expressing support for Gonzalez saying his removal was "unjust and arbitrary."

Student supporters of the ousted director also held protest actions on UP campuses in Manila. Los Baños (where the student report is governors come from), and Diliman.

Faculty regent Judy Taguiwalo blasted the controversy could be linked to plans to allow the PGH to lease "private" clinics and facilities, a move that would allow the current town's tradition of covering primarily to the disadvantaged classes.

Gonzalez was reportedly opposed to "the privatization or the setup of private laboratory, pharmacy and radiology clinics within the PGH compound."

PT test scandal

IN JULY, it was reported that physical therapy (PT) graduates from the Philippines had been barred from taking examinations in the United States apparently for alleged "security breaches."

Although the suspension was lifted soon after, it raised the specter of the 2006 nursing examination scandal when cheating was also alleged.

According to a TV news report, 700 Filipino nurses were disqualified from taking the PT licensure examinations in the US following allegations that Filipinos, along with other nationalities, cheated in the 2007 tests.

As quoted in media reports, the website of the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) and it appeared the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) testing for physical therapy graduates from four countries, the Philippines included, due to "pervasive, ongoing security breaches."

The FSBPT subsequently said it did not find evidence that Filipino PTs cheated in the 2007 tests. But it added that it was preparing a "separate, retest exam" for the graduates, expected to be completed in 2011.

"The necessary security measures to be

response to compelling evidence published by the FSBPT's reflecting retention and methodical cheating and distribution of recalled questions by significant numbers of graduates of programs in the affected countries, as well as several cease presentation companies specifically targeted to those graduates," the statement read.

The FSBPT had singled out a Manila review center that allegedly shared banks of test questions, thus, constituting copyright infringement and cheating. It was reportedly considering taking legal action against the review center.

The FSBPT banned Filipino PTs from taking licensure tests starting in July until it completed the allegations.

Filipino PTs have to pass the exams to work in the US.

In the 2006 nursing exam scandal, several nursing graduates retook the tests where cheating was alleged. As with the PT one, exams centers were identified as the source of leakages of actual test questions.

The US-based Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) required all Filipino nurses with 2006 licenses, who wished to work in the US, to retake the tests in question.

Bar exam bombing

AN EXPLOSION in September rocked what should have been a joyous occasion for law graduates who had just completed the four-Sunday bar examinations at De La Salle University on Taft Avenue, Manila.

The explosion injured 30 examinees, mostly graduates of San Beda College.

Worst hit was 23-year-old Christian Soberano College law graduate Ramon Lazaro who, although she lost both legs, showed enormous courage and remained optimistic.

Investigators said fireworks rudely caused the attack on the examinees and some suspects had been arrested. As of press time, the case remains open and unsolved.

TGI no-homework Friday

WHAT SEEMED to be a harmless little memo to teachers signed by Education Secretary Armin Luistro in September incited a thumbs-down from teachers in the public schools.

Memorandum No. 392 says teachers shall avoid giving homework assignments to students over the weekend to give the kids time to "enjoy their childhood and spend quality time with their parents."

Certain public school teachers' groups reacted adversely to the memo, claiming it violated their "freedom to decide how best to teach their students."

The private schools were more upbeat about the memorandum.

Playgrounds for the MIND

Member Schools

Angelicum College promotes family-centered Christmas season of sharing

LONG BEFORE the Christmas season started, the learners, learning facilitators, disciplement heads, school officials as well as other employees of Angelicum College provided opportunities for parents and other members of the family to get involved in the instructional way of sharing and selfgiving for reborn this Christmas.

The Angelicum Chorale, for example, composed of 1st year to 4th year high school learners, responded positively to the invitation of the Araneta Center to sing their Christmas and Christmas songs in the shopping arcades of SM Mall, Farmers, and Gateway on Dec. 6, 7, and 8. With the support and support of their parents, such a thrilling experience shares the learners' readiness to perceive the Filipino value's distinctive way of manifesting the love for the season of Christmas, which specifically calls to sharing and giving. As a result, their sensitivity and responsibility improved as they availed of the perfect opportunity for them to render musical ministries. Their rehearsals, which started last September, led them to exercise their sense of responsibility. Furthermore, the process developed among the group the much needed teamwork, discipline, and camaraderie as reflected in their musical three-day performances in the Araneta Center and in the Angelicum Campus where the group got invited to sing for the Rank Xchange Communication (RSC) Pasko-han big gathering in a school setting and in the AC Inspirational Christmas party. Expressions and supportive manners and devotions to each and to God as well. Through a spontaneous way of singing each employee's participation, everyone had the chance to receive a gift in the year-end Christmas party which was planned by the AC Social Involvement Committee.

Likewise, families took part in the initiative-a-Cause which highlighted the SEC Pasko-han initiated by the Religious Affairs for the benefit of the marginalized groups supported by Angelicum College. In addition, Angelicum College celebrated the 2010 Family Week to empower the youth to know their ministry through physical fitness to the love of a family demonstration. Days before the usual Christmas vacation commenced, the Family Week 2010 Celebration included other events such as the Bingo Social, Christmas Musical Show and Wax Recital, Fun Rides, Fun Games, AC Family-ples, Grandstill Games (Parents vs. Employees), Kids' Singing Contest, Paint-Singing Contest, Group Dance Contest, Relay Walking Contest, Lantern Making Contest and of course the Yuletide Thanksgiving Mass at the Dominga Church. Angelicum College lived up such events for the exclusive participation and delight of learners and parents alike. Such activities of family bonding are ways to take part in a holistic caring or nurturing manner. More learning opportunities designed to meet the varied needs and interests of the AC learners.

PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

The Philippine Women's University celebrated World Teachers' Day on October 5, 2010 as declared by the Department of Education and shares with campus-wide learning the rich festival by reminding the 1st to 3rd trimester SY 2010-2011 to demonstrate their solidarity at the Concepcion Hall, Gymnasium, Manila. Photo shows PWU'S, board chair Dr. Helena Z. Benitez (center) as guest of honor, VP for Academics Dr. Vivian Salvador (to her right) and CES Alfredo R. Abuda (second right) with the awardees, from left, Ms. Nelia Rivera, Richard Jones, Dr. Mohamad Pandapatan, Eugenio 'Boy' Mendoza Jr., Dr. Rosario Cu, Mark May Gonzales, Rose Cook Rivera, Fernelita Bautista and Joy Cu. Not in photo are Dominga Reyes Jr. and Irma Villanueva of the School of Arts and Sciences.

WMSU judo team to represent PH in HK tourney

EIGHT GOLD and four silver medalists were brought home by the Mindanao State University (MSU) judo team as they have risen to claim the overall champion in the 1st Iloilo National Invitational Judo Tournament recently. With their impressive performance, the team was tapped by the Philippine Judo Federation to represent the country in the forthcoming Hong Kong International Invitational Judo Tournament set on May 4 to 5. Five of the team members who placed first two (2) in the said tournament from the National Capital Region (NCR) to compete in each criteria/ divisional classification. Meanwhile, the following WMSU players won in the different categories under the men's division to wit: open bell category - Gilgo, Mark Mendoza (gold) and Daniel Barcos (silver); - 60kgs, Frederick Tormon (gold) and Kristine Velasco (silver); - 66kgs, John Ramon Guinguit - 81 kgs, Kacy Agonoy; an white category - 73kgs, Mark Lorenz Lacuesta (gold) and Jaybee Tortugales (silver). For the women division to be winners division, to wit: open bell category - 48- 48 kgs Shamila Sulaiman (gold) - 52 - 57 - 70 kgs Lena Ann Tesoro (gold) and Rica Angela Tronido (silver). There is also one winner in this bell division as - 66kgs, Felizee Tormon (gold). The said competition was attended by the delegates mean Dr. Ricardo Ramos Jr. Cabalza, formerly the dean of the College of Physical Education, Recreation, and Sports. The members of the WMSU judo team are being trained by Apolinario Tindoy Jr.

PFD hosts 23rd WFD-RSAP Representative Meeting

THE PHILIPPINE Federation of the Deaf proudly hosted the 23rd World Federation of the Deaf - Regional Secretariat in Asia Pacific (WFD-RSAP) Representative Meeting last Nov. 23 to 28, at the Development Academy of the Philippines, Tagaytay City. Ulrich Mosmuller, WFD-RSAP Director, considered this meeting to be of utmost importance as delegates of the WFD-RSAP Asian Member and members of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (World) met to discuss issues and concerns identified as deaf people. Delegates were welcomed as representatives in their own right. Representatives from India, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Korea, and all over the Philippines discussed updates on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities and participated in group meetings and plenary reports. All with the intention of promoting social awareness about deaf persons, dissemination of sign language, training of sign language interpreters and establishment of sign language centers and developing their respective governmental efforts on these issues. Nov. 27, Saturday, marked the closing ceremonies and dinner which was hosted by the office of the president and counselor Mr. Victor Franco YCC II the Ok La Salle College of Saint Benedict (OLS-CSB) with partnerships by Silent Steps, the deaf liberal ambassador of the School of Education and Applied Studies of OLS-CSB.

MCHS basketball team champion in Milo-WBL

THE MCHAM College High School (MCHS) basketball team was named champions in the Milo-Rhonne Basketball League (RBL) 11-under Competitive Division held last Dec. 5 at the Xavier School Sports Complex. They beat San Beda College Alabang in a thrilling match that ended with a score of 50-52 in overtime. This is the second title the MCHS basketball team won this year. They were undefeated in the MBCbal and bagged the Championship title last October. Team's 6th year student Kaori Ikegami was named Most Valuable Player (MVP).

ADMU CONFERS DOCTORATE ON OSCAR LOPEZ

Oscar M. Lopez, chairman emeritus of Lopez Holdings Corporation and PI Alpine Holdings Corp., was conferred the degree of Doctor of Humanities (honoris causa) by the board of trustees of the Ateneo de Manila University during the 2010 commencement ceremony at the Ateneo de Manila University - Loyola Heights (AdMU). Shown are Dr. John Paul Vergara, vice president for the Loyola Schools; Ateneo de Manila University; Dr. Antonio A. Oposco, dean of the Professional Schools and dean of the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health; Fr. Jose Cecilio Magadia, SJ, provincial superior of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus; Fr. Bienvenido F. Nebres, SJ, president of the Ateneo de Manila University; Dr. Lopez; Gemma B. Lobo, chair of the board of trustees, Ateneo de Manila University; Jose Santos, vice president for Finance and Investment; and Dr. Fidel Nemenzo, vice president for Administration and Planning.

IRAQI AMBASSADOR VISITS UST

His Excellency Wathiq Badri Hamza Al-Hadithi, outfit of the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq to the Philippines, had visited Saint Thomas University (UST) on Jan. 6 during his journey visit to the University of Santo Tomas. The University of Santo Tomas will be open hosting its 400th year celebrations in January 2011.

SDCA HOLDS BARKADA KONTRA DROGA SEMINAR

The Center for Social Action (CSA) of St. Dominic College of Asia (SDCA) in partnership of Bangkong Diwa Board (BBB) recently conducted a seminar-workshop entitled Barkada Kontra Droga (BKD), which aims to promote awareness effects of illegal drugs among the students. The first topic discussed was The Government Effort to Address the Drug Abuse Problem facilitated by Glen Dela Pena, DBB public information officer. Followed by Medical Effects of Drug Abuse by Dr. Rebecca Lopez, SDCA physician. Lauren Grace C. Posada, DDB legal consultant, explained the Dybrid features of the BKB. The event was concluded by symbolic signing of commitment, distribution of BKD certification cards and BKD Lanyard to every participant. Photo shows students during the commitment signing of commitment.

LPU DEAN PARTICIPATES IN 2010 LICE

Dr. Anna P. Valdez (second from left, on duty), dean of the College of Allied Health Professions, University of the Philippines Manila (UP Manila), participated in the 2010 Lasbela International Conference on Education (LICE) held in Heathrow, London. LICE is an international refereed conference dedicated to the advancement of the theory and practice in education. It promotes collaborative excellence between academicians and professionals from education.

CEU hosts seminar-workshop for guidance counselors

CENTRO ESCOLAR University recently organized a seminar-workshop for high school guidance counselors recently at the Multimedia Instruction Room. Guidance counselors from NCR, Region II and Region IV gathered in this one-day event that focused on the topic "Managing Challenges and Solo Parenting: Issues to Effective Counseling." Herald Cruz Parenting Teacher head, public relations officer and licensed guidance counselor of the Center for Family Ministry, was the guest speaker of the seminar-workshop. Participants were divided in 4 different effective approaches on counseling children with a single parent and handling the issues that are faced by these students. The counselors also had time to share their experiences on such concerns and the way they handled the situation so that other participants could learn from them. The group seminar-workshop for guidance counselors was organized by the Marketing and Personnel Department in partnership with the Counseling and Testing Department.

DOST-SEI director is new PNU president

DEPARTMENT OF Science and Technology-Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI) director Dr. Isabel B. Ogena is the new president of the Philippine Normal University (PNU), the country's Center of Excellence in Teacher Education. With a majority vote of 7-1 from the eight-member Board of Regents, Ogena becomes the 19th president of PNU where she also graduated magna cum laude in 1978. Ogena will serve a full term of four years and will assume the presidency on Jan. 1, 2011 to Dec. 31, 2014 as provided under the Higher Education Modernization Act (RA 8292). Ogena replaces former Department of Education Undersecretary Dr. Air A. Malapo who serves as OIC of the Office of the President.

Hope of students, community keeps school standing

FOR MORE than 300 students of a small elementary school in Balungao, Lingayen, hope wrought a miracle.

It came in the form of a P1.5-million project for the rehabilitation of the one-story school building with two classrooms.

For years, Governor E. Jane Ehdminolango Jr. School, despite its dilapidated walls, had survived primarily because its students, who hoped to acquire an education and face a brighter future, chose to remain.

Constructed before World War II, the school was destroyed during the Japanese occupation in 1944. It was not renovated until 1955, but was damaged again when Typhoon "Frank" devastated northeastern Luzon in 2008.

Lack of funds kept the school just the way Frank left it—until recently.

But the physical appearance of the building did not matter to its students, who faithfully reported for classes.

The unbreakable spirit and hope of its students, parents, and teachers seemed to have kept the structure standing despite the battering it had received.

The optimism and faith of the community impressed a small group of employees of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) who visited Governor E. Jane Elementary School in June.

The school is situated in the same barangay as NGCP's Balungao Substation.

Inspired by the indomitable spirit of the community, the employees decided to make the school a beneficiary of the corporation's Build. Educate. Lead. Project.

At the start of the current school year, the power transmission service provider distributed bags and school supplies in Balungao and its other host communities around the country. More than 70,000 students from 374 public elementary schools nationwide benefited from the project.

The project helped bring students back to schools, as many parents had told teachers they could not send their children to school because they did not have the money to buy the needed school supplies.

Governor E. Jane Elementary School was among those that saw an increase in student enrollment—from 346 students last year to 521 this school year.

School administrators had to add another Grade 2 section and provide a classroom for the pre-elementary class, which had 75 students divided into two shifts.

Seeing the effect of its initial effort, the NGCP took to advocacy for education a step further by spearheading and sponsoring a building rehabilitation project to provide much-needed classrooms for the bigger student population.

It recommended that a proper learning environment to help students perform better and develop their individual skills and capabilities was as important as the bags, notebooks, pencils and other tools.

THE GOVERNOR E. Jane Elementary School after typhoon Frank

To rehabilitate the Governor E. Jane Elementary School, NGCP worked closely with the local government of Balungao, the Department of Education, the Governor E. Jane Parents-Teachers Association. The groundbreaking ceremony for the rehabilitation of the two-classroom, one-story school building took place in November and the project is expected to be completed early this year.

Teaching the young financial literacy

SOME 400 business students of Silliman University (Dumaguete) attended recently a presentation of the Be a Wise Saver campaign.

The campaign is a project of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) to raise awareness about the value of saving and the importance of responsible banking and investing. It complements the Financial Literacy Program (FLP) launched by PDIC in 2006.

For FLP the PDIC partnered with the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations, and Philippine Council of Deans and Educators in Business (PCDEB).

The project is a nationwide advocacy that teaches the youth about the value of savings, the importance of savings to economic growth and the role of PDIC in providing deposit insurance protection.

During the Silliman forum, representatives of PDIC, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), and major banking groups talked about financial literacy.

Maria Lourdes Pena-Pelin, PDIC vice president for corporate affairs and one of the speakers, noted the low level of financial literacy in the Philippines.

A pre-forum survey conducted among forum attendees found that only 5.6 percent of 200 respondents had bank accounts.

A Financial Quotient (FIQ) survey conducted by Citibank in 2008 showed that Filipinos had a financial intelligence quotient of only 47.5, less than half the maximum score of 100. The study also revealed that only one out of ten Filipinos was consciously saving for retirement.

Kenyon Shepherd of Asia United Bank found out 89 percent of Filipino households had no bank accounts. This could be one reason why the Philippines was among the countries with the lowest savings rate.

Sun Life Philippines found that only 34 to 35 percent of the country's population had any form of insurance protection. One half of those with insurance only had the government pension program and group insurance.

Metrobank data showed that the country's national savings rate was 15 percent of the gross domestic product, lower than those of Singapore, 45 percent; Malaysia, 37 percent; and Indonesia, 26 percent.

PDIC president Jose Negrillo said teaching students the value of saving would prepare them to become better savers and investors, and equip them to manage their finances.

The FLP has distributed some 12,000 copies of textbook/guides to public and private high schools, reaching around seven million students every year.

The project earned PDIC in 2009 the 1st Gawad Paniquilkong Bayaniyan Award from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel. It was cited for its achievement in national development, benefit to the general public, and the quality of productivity management.

The complementary Be a Wise Saver Campaign aims to teach the young the 7 Habits of a Wise Saver:

1. Know your bank.
2. Know your bank products.
3. Know your bank services and fees.
4. Keep your bank records safe and updated.
5. Transact only inside the bank with authorized bank personnel.
6. Be informed about PDIC deposit insurance.
7. Be cautious.

Among the schools rendered no fee by the campaign are University of Baguio, Saint Louis University, University of the Cordilleras, University of San Jose Recoletos, and University of San Carlos.

PDIC (Left) was the 1st Gawad Paniquilkong Karparangan Award from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel for the Financial Literacy Project; Students (above) from University of Baguio and University of Cordilleras during the Bagsin ng the Be a Wise Saver roadshow

Pangasinan gets much-needed school buildings from a foundation

THE SM Prime Holdings fund set over recently the 39th and 40th school buildings it built to local school officials in Bolinao, Pangasinan.

The one-story, two-classroom structure in Carenan Elementary School was built on the basis of the old one destroyed by Typhoon "Pepeng." It will serve 105 students from Barangay Carenan East and West, Bonales, Tamaess West, Bonales Proper and Sal-Bankalahan.

Arturo de la Cruz, school principal, said almost 200 students had to transfer to other schools while others totally stopped schooling as their families lost their homes after the typhoon.

Batin returned to school this year. With the Department of Education still doing repairs of many school buildings, the SM donation has helped ease the classroom crisis.

Meanwhile, Guiling-Guiling National High School, also in Bonales, received a one-story, two-classroom school building. Students come from Barangay Guiling, Guiling, Balaqui-Poblekpak, Cattangcan, San Isidro and two barangays in Tarlac: San Agustin and Salcedo.

HEARTFELT Students and teachers of Guiling-Guiling National High School honour their thanks for their new school building.

School officials thanked SM Foundation and SM Bonales Mall for helping meet the needs of schools in Bonales. Speaking during the presentation of a plaque of appreciation on SM Foundation Hotline Ty Ka, Jenny Mendoza said SM Mall was "giving back the support part of our consumers by focusing on the needs of the communities within the mall."

The SM Group of Companies, through SM Foundation, would continue to find ways to serve communities within and beyond the malls.

THE NEW school building adorned for Christmas

Top 10 in 2010: Teachers . . .

From page F1

school in Tambacan City in Gendrex Pulalon was repaired. In the municipal among 10 children and the family's breadwinner, Mario was a convicted rapist who was granted provisional clemency three years ago.

Cecilia Sosas and Merlyn Sequito, principal and teacher, respectively, at Sasa Elementary School in Lanzilan, Davao, were kidnapped at around 11 a.m. one day in November. An hour later police and army men found Tuscapis abandoned by her abductors. But Sosas has not been found by her captors since being abducted in November.

By December, the education department was pulling teachers out of Basilan, forcing class suspension in the area.

Education Secretary Luistro has appealed for "prayers and supplications" and organized support for efforts to provide vigilant security for teachers.

In Maguindanao, another teacher was killed about a month after Hanah Limp of Datu Piang Elementary School was shot dead near the school's gate.

In Pikit, North Cotabato, the Pedpid schools division has ordered the suspension of two primary schools for more than 2,000 first and second graders students displaced after gunmen set their classrooms at Bualan Elementary School on fire on Nov. 24.

Even research proved deadly for one of the country's top Tourism wiz, until two colleagues, was allegedly caught in a crossfire during an encounter between the military and communist rebels in Leyte.

Antonio L. Gil, 56, a specialist in plant taxonomy and ethnobotany, president of the Philippine Native Plants Conservation Society, and a researcher at the University of the Philippines Institute of Biology (IB), was reportedly gathering specimens seedlings of endangered trees when shot.

Dr. Perry Ong, IB director, said Gil was the de facto curator of the institute's Jose Vera Santos Herbarium.

Although the military maintained the incident occurred during a legitimate military operation, doubts remained about the circumstances of the researcher's death.

Gil's team had supposedly informed the military it would be conducting research in the area and was allowed to work there.

Reading program for very young kids

AN INSTANT reader program that can teach a child as young as three years old to read in 10 days or less has been developed by teacher-trainer Soveiara Quintano-Arboleda.

The Instant Reader Program aims to develop early the habit of reading, which Arboleda, English teacher and director of The Learning Place, a private elementary school in the University of the Philippines Los Baños (Laguna), considers the foundation for learning among children.

The FunPHIP Inc. (Fun Think Preschool Reading Program) initiated the addition of a new category in early reading and literacy she said, using a proven research-based, evidence-based and child-friendly approach.

The FunPHIP Instant Reader Program is available to interested schools here and abroad.

Arboleda is currently involved in research and development at FunPHIP Inc.

She said their campaign is fun-teach the teaching of reading was not just directed at parents with preschool kids, but also educators, private and government, government officials and other concerned in early childhood education and literacy.

For information on the Instant Reader Program, call (049) 5763699 (049) 5762898 or visit www.funphip.ph

Other news

Heavy

SEN. Lito Lapid has filed two bills for the benefit of school children.

In Proposed Senate Bill No. 2179 or "Bal Act Limiting the Amount of Weight of Bags Carried by Children in School and Implementing Proactive Measures to Prevent School Children's Health from the Adverse Effect of Heavy School Bag."

In October, Lapid filed Senate Bill No. 2517 or the "School Furniture and Related Del Act of 2010" that requires school canteens to provide only nutritious food and drinks.

Overpriced noodles

TESDAepid swapped on Feb. 1, 2011, the controversial P427-million fertilized mas. dist project that would have supposedly benefited "ul. dar. ops. ng mahihirap" in hungry-prone provinces.

The move followed the filing by the Office of the Ombudsman of charges against former Education Secretary Jesli Lapus and 11 others for the agency's overpricing of the instant-noodles purchase. The Ombudsman said that it found probable cause to investigate Lapus, six other former Tesdapid officials, and supplier Jennyse Manufacturing Corp. for graft.

No co "pajamas"

MONA Valisno, in her short time as education secretary will be remembered for his stand against "pajamas writing" among the young learners is encouraged but spelling.

What kind of writing? Examples: Instead of "kabuto" to denote laughter, "pahmoot" replaces "tawa"; or "jejemon" instead of "hello," the word "ocha pokshet."

She ordered public school teachers to stop their students not only from sending "pajamot" text messages, but also from using "jejemon" misspelled words in essays and other written requirements at school.

Rizal and his legacy

Dominic S. Lee-Chiong

I addressed my son, "If you manage to get a scholarship to Harvard, by summer, by all means, I will highly encourage you to do so. Why do you worry so my boy?"

"Because I love the Philippines," Jhoel said with conviction. "Because it is good school as any other, and our country needs good people to stay. How'll you say this to your students?"

True, I constantly say this to my students, exhorting them to take the measure to stay and work for the betterment of society. But I have also researched and recommended many bright students to go for graduate studies in the best universities abroad, and yes, most of them never come back. I console myself with the thought that at least some of them are doing research or an international scale, serving the world in their own way.

Soon I then started telling my friend about Jhoel, his ambitions and his dreams. Scott then entered many books about Rizal. When he was in Grade 2, he even wrote a poem about the hero, complete with handdrawn portrait, which was published in the home magazine.

While reading, Scott was dreaming about going abroad for high school or college. Soon, who knows, he might want to stay here. He adored Gray Aquino, whom he thought was Filipina's rightful successor in the last presidential elections, at the ripe old age of 11, he campaigned for P-Noy among his classmates, all of whom, of course, could not vote.

"But their parents and their grandparents and the friends of their parents and grandparents could vote" was his explanation.

Through the years, Scott has done humorous satires on corrupt politicians, rap songs, sketches and videos against terrorism and what he perceives as other unpopular acts. There are not clear assignments, though he has drawn them to classmates and teachers.

Never all, Rizal fought with the pen, not the sword. For us kids, our pen is the video."

150 Asians/heroes

Rizal's lasting legacy is the fact that he continues to inspire many people, young and old. "I grew up as an Atenean trying to emulate Rizal's short but meaningful life as an idiot which shows that we must break the walls in our minds, region conditioned in our capabilities, and become courageous about the future we are told," says Gardner. "Like Rizal, I'm confident to conquer quickly and instill reverence by learning change. For me, Rizal established as from the bandage of the mind and the soul."

"For me as a businessman, I try to help my fellow countrymen in every small way I can—be it by giving them employment, teaching them business opportunities, investing in our economy, or simply by saying good things about the Philippines," says Roque. "If like Dr. Rizal, we all love our country and believe in the Filipino, we will slowly but surely be all looking in one direction in uplifting our own beloved Philippines. Besides, we only have one country and if we don't love it, who else will?"

"To Live and Not to Count the Cost" is a compendium of stories from 150 Ateneans today about their personal stories/heroes. Aside from Rizal, those profiled include not only top brass honchos Gregorio del Pilar (who inspired foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo) and the ever icon Fr. James Reuter), Emilio Javier Cebu inspired the late president Fr. Bert Nebres), Juan Luna (Ambassador Libay) and Raúl Roco, Armando Intengan, Winny and Cory Aquino, but also well-known personalities in various fields (Bienvenido Cabal de Ayala, Jose Avellana, Salvador Bernal, Lorenzo Tañada, Raul Rodriguez, Alfredo Bengzon, Fr. Miguel Bernad, Fr. Joseph Galdon, Doreen Fernandez, Soledad Reyes, Eugenio Lopez, Sr., Manny Pangilinan, Ruby Dalupan).

There there are the people who, in their own ways, have become heroes to myseum-Pointer Inst. Mat Bolasa wrote about Agrifina "Big Boy" Ocampo, the Ateneo High School security guard for more than three decades. Automatic Entry president Santi Uy's service at the Ateneo de Manila University. Fr. Nebres' Instituto, the Rizal Library librarian who "[minimized the integrity of the library and demanded respect for the institution."

I never about the quite limitless of physicist Sonia Uy-Makiwan, who in very ways about Philips Domingo, the nephew of a janitor, "who taught himself how to use the machine shop lathe in the old, pre-war Ateneo machine shop behind its the physics department."

As for my son, I reminded him that, after studying at the Ateneo and the University of Santo Tomas, Rizal continued his studies at the Universidad Central de Madrid, the University of Heidelberg, the University of Heidelberg. If the opportunity came his way, I urged my son not to close the doors to further learning abroad. But I know, like Rizal, he would come back.

"To Live and Not to Count the Cost: Ateneans Inspiring Ateneans 1859-2009" is available at the Ateneo de Manila University Press, tel. 4265984, and e-mail ateneopress@gmail.com.ph.

E-mail the author at lee-chiong@yahoo.com

DESPITE the threat to his life, Rizal chose to come home.

Fun run with a mission

By Erika Sauler

BUSY if you want to help build schools and chapels.

San Sebastian College-Recoletos aims to raise funds for its charity projects through "Tinga Run 2011." Today part of Mirador," a fun run on Gen. Lim at the Old Quadrangle of Arts complex in Cavite City.

"Through this event (the first ever Tinga Run), we hope to show everyone that running can benefit not only a person's health but also the lives of so many people," SSC-R president Fr. Anthony Murillo said.

Among other things, Fr. Leonardo Pellejar, SSC-R vice president for administration, said in a media briefing that they hope to make education for the needy a possibility through the funds that would be raised from the Tinga Run.

"We believe that learning isn't something that must be enjoyed (only) by the few. It is a universal privilege for all," Pellejar said.

The Order of Augustinian Recollects, which owns SSC-R, has also expanded its mission any work to Taiwan and Africa. The Recollect missionaries have helped build eight chapels, three schools, and (c) deep wells, and have provided dental and medical aid in Liberia in West Africa.

"Through the Tinga Run 2011, we hope to collect enough funds for our missionary work and charity programs, which are focused on the total development of man. This is in line with our commitment to serve and educate Filipinos and other nationalities in the Recollect way," Murillo added.

Proceeds will also benefit the SSC Missals and Catechism community outreach programs.

The Tinga Run, which launches the SSC-R's 65th foundation week celebration, is also a means to promote a healthy lifestyle among members of the SSC-R community.

The fun run, which is open to the public, will have 5 km, 3 km and 1.8 km race categories. The 5 km category is much category will receive cash prizes with separate rankings for male and female runners. Prizes will also be given to the youngest and oldest runner.

Registration starts at 4:30 a.m. Registration fee is P500, which covers a singlet and a bib number.

Inquiries may be sent via e-mail to ofc or "like" the event on Facebook. "Tinga FUN RUN "Call the runners at at 7348931 local 204 or e-mail male_vicki@dlsu-bso.com.

UP BIOLOGY HOMECOMING
The University of the Philippines Institute of Biology (IB) will hold its homecoming on Jan. 6, at 4 pm, at the Balagtas Alumni, UP Diliman. Alumni of the former Department of Botany and Zoology, and IB are invited. Photo shows the Board of Trustees of the IB Alumni in UP Diliman (IBA-UPD). Front row (from left): Lucille C. Gregorio (vice-president), Irma R. Cuevo (auditor), Gloria Quiza-Cuizon (president), Dr. Rosa D. Jacinto (PRO), Jonathan M. Bala, and Remedios B. Rodero (treasurer). Back row: (L-R) Dr. Leo Kendrick Pastanillo (assistant treasurer), Dr. Ma. Lourdes C. Arada, Cristina A. Asuncion, Dr. Lilian B. Angeles, and Dr. Windell B. Rivera. Dr. Percy L. Ong, IB director, is board secretary. Visit http://www.upibalumni.com.ar call Quiza-Cuizon at 09274384112.

UK science journal publishes study by 8-year-olds

LONDON—It came with wobbly writing and hand-drawn diagrams, but an elementary school science project has made it into a peer-reviewed journal from Britain's prestigious Royal Society.

Biology Letters published a report conducted and written by a group of 8- to 10-year-olds/learners in English elementary school investigating the way bumblebees see colors and patterns. The scientific organization—which is more than three centuries old and includes some of the world's most eminent scientists—said the children reported findings that were a "genuine advance" in the field of insect color and pattern vision.

Working with a team scientist from University College London, the children carefully documented their methodology and discussed the data they collected.

The group trained bees to go to targets of different colors by giving them a sugar reward, and reported that the insects were able to learn and remember cues based on color and pattern.

The study successfully went through peer review—although its pronunciation was slightly controversial.

"Scientists do experiments on mammice, because they are similar in size, but bees could actually be close to man, too," the introduction read. The report was peppered with other amusing phrasing and diagrams drawn in colored pencil.

Scientists who commented on the kids' report in the journal said, although the experiments were modest and lacked statistical analysis, they were cleverly and correctly designed and held their own compared to those conducted by highly trained specialists.

"The experimenters have asked a scientific question and answered it well," neuroscientists Lars Chittka and Natalie Hempel de Ibarra wrote in commentary alongside the children's report.

Mona Lisa, the scientist who coordinated the study, said she hoped the project could inspire people to approach science in a way that was creative and fun.

"We like bees. Science is cool and fun because you get to do stuff that no one has ever done before," the children concluded.

AP

LITERACY DRIVE EXPANDS
The Cebu Pioneer Program (CPP), of Cebuana Philippines Inc. (CPI), order of Cebuanos and Cebuanas, has benefitted 1,200 people in public elementary schools in Metro Cebu. Partnering with Cebuanos San Pengpeiros, Iloilo and Cebu, (B) this number, CPI are from 14 Mandaluyong public schools where Cebuanos has partnered with the Mandaluyong Chamber of Commerce and Industry. CHP also reported that more than 1,000 reading skills of non-readers or (OWR) (Student) at Risk of failing) for four consecutive years. Chief's Rotary (20) coordinator for policy, governance and public affairs, Cebuanos has also partnered with partnerships are available in reading activities to volunteers. In private or volunteer mentors and CHP graduates from San Lopez Integrated School, Cuyo Rodeo Tropa Elementary School and Natalia Lopez Elementary School.